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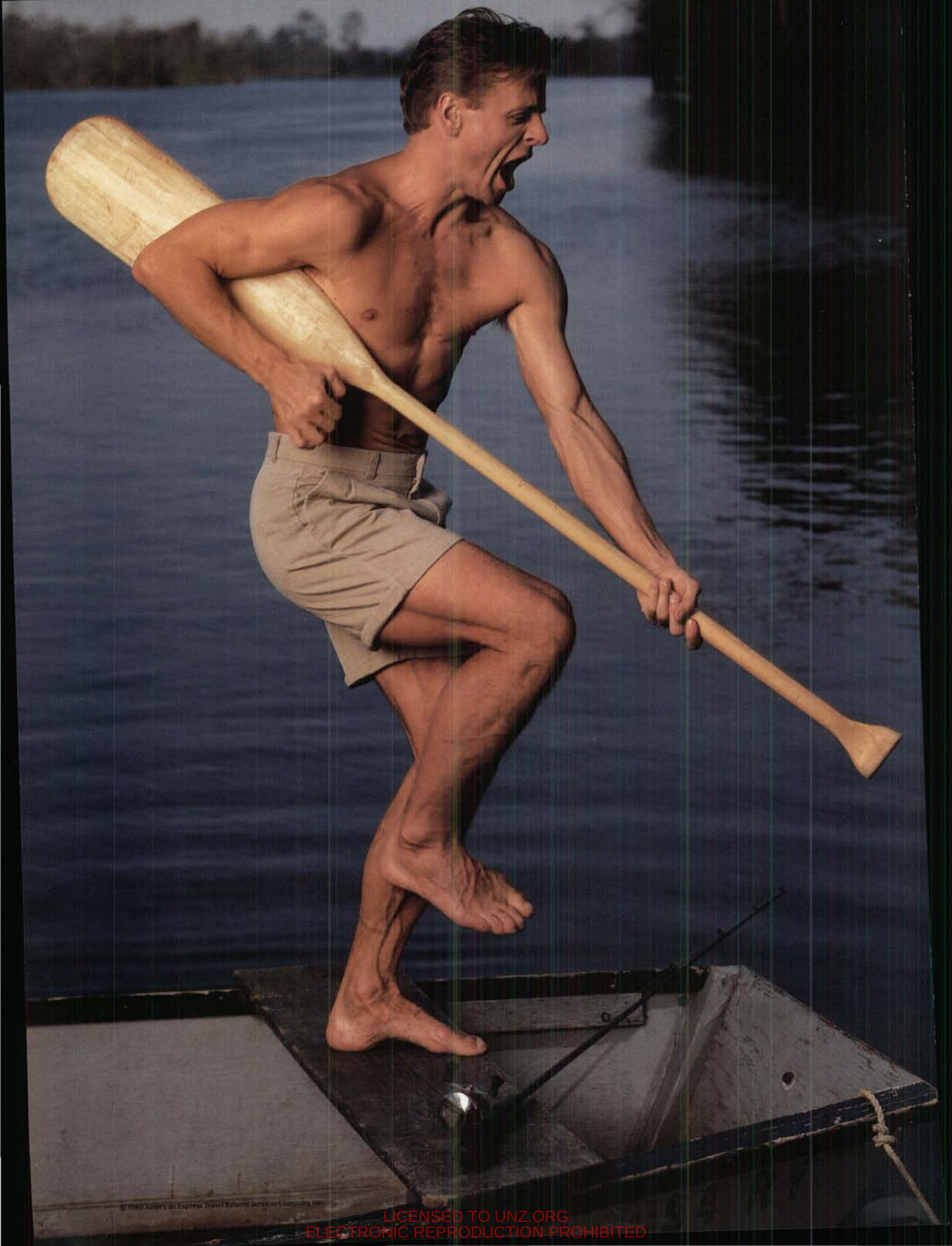

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

WE looked in on "Forbidden Broadway 1989" the other night, our ostensible purpose being to check out the show's "Summer Shock" edition. Actually, we just needed a fix. The current version includes numbers (currently in development) that poke fun at "Legs Diamond," the Baryshnikov "Metamorphosis," and "Jerome Robbins' Broadway." Of these, we liked best the "West Side Story" parody that turns the song "Cool" into "Butch" and then emasculates the choreography. But what brought down the house was Jeff Lyons' imitation of Mandy Patinkin singing that old Judy Garland favorite "Somewhat Over-Indulgent." There's also a regular new cast member, Dorothy Kiara, who has replaced Roxie Lucas. If you thought that nobody would ever be able to touch Ms. Lucas's impersonation of Mary Martin, you were sort of right and sort of wrong.

For some time now, we have considered Gerard Alessandrini, the show's creator, to be New York's best theatre critic: on specific points, he doesn't miss a trick. Yet the over-all effect of "Forbidden Broadway" is to engender a charitable feeling toward theatre, and we've finally figured out why. While Alessandrini uses Broadway's past to lampoon Broadway's present —the song from "Brigadoon" or "My Fair Lady" or "Can-Can" or "Oklahoma!" that gets at the subtext of Jackie Mason or "Speed-the-Plow" or "Les Misérables" or the rivalry between the Shuberts and the Nederlanders—the show itself echoes the old-fashioned Broadway musical in juxtaposing a cynical sophistication with unabashed sentimentality. "Forbidden Broadway" 's bitter-sweet, funny-moving, happy-sad last sequence—from a "Fiddler" parody through an unchanged snatch of "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" to a chorus of "Give My Regards . . ."—reminds us what Broadway theatre was supposed to be about. Which is why Alessandrini never radically changes the ending, and why he never should.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedules and ticket information.)

Festival Latino in New York—Opening performances of a three-week theatrical *celebración*, featuring plays from Latin America and the United States, which will run through Aug. 20. Unless otherwise noted, all performances are in Spanish, with simultaneous translation available on selected dates. The schedule: "The Great U.S. Cranial Circus," by Myrna Casas. Presented by Puerto Rico's Producciones Cisne, Aug. 1-6. . . . ¶ "No One Writes to the Colonel," adapted by Carlos Giménez from a García Márquez story. A production of Venezuela's Rajatabla Company, Aug. 1-5. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

The Lady in Question—A comedy written by and starring Charles Busch and set in Germany during the Second World War. Directed by Kenneth Elliott. Opens July 25 at 6:45. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Mandy Patinkin in Concert: Dress Casual—A four-week engagement by Mr. Patinkin begins July 25 and will run through Aug. 19. With Paul Ford on piano. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

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"Mandy Patinkin in Concert"

Privates on Parade—Jim Dale and Simon Jones star in the 1977 musical by Peter Nichols (book and lyrics) and Denis King (score). Previews begin July 26. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

Shenandoah—John Cullum reprises his original role in a revival of the 1975 musical, which was based on James Lee Barrett's 1965 film of the same name. Score by Gary Geld, lyrics by Peter Udell, and book by James Lee Barrett, Philip Rose (who once again directs), and Mr. Udell. A limited engagement that is now in previews. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

NEW THIS SEASON

Aristocrats—Brian Friel's portrait of the family of Judge O'Donnell, of Ballybeg Hall, in Donegal, is witty, ironic, and loving. It is faultlessly performed by Niall Buggy (an astonishing actor who got his start at the Abbey Theatre), Peter Crombie, John Pankow, Kaiulani Lee, John Christopher James, and Margaret Colin, among others, under the direction of Robin Lefèvre. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/8/89.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-0102.)

Black and Blue—An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Hector Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (2/6/89, under Dancing.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

The Cocktail Hour—A dramatist returns home to break the news to his prosperous family that he has written a play about them and to ask their permission to have it produced. More easily said than done. A. R. Gurney's humor has never been more sparkling, his characters never more engaging. Under Jack O'Brien's direction, Nancy Marchand gives a marvellous performance as the hero's mother. With Holland Taylor, Burt Edwards, and Richard Backus. (11/7/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

The Heidi Chronicles—Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With a superb cast, led by Joan Allen and Boyd Gaines. (12/26/88) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Hot Minute—A musical revue, conceived by Melanie Mintz, about backup singers and their aspirations toward the big time. With Vivian Cherry, Pattie Darcy, Jon Fiore, Vicki Sue Robinson, and John-Martin Green. The show runs one night a week, on Thursdays, at 8 and 11. Starting Aug. 1, the show will play on Wednesdays, too. (Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. 228-6300.)

I Could Go On Lip-Synching!—This one-man variety show made up of cultural arcana is kind of weird, kind of quirky, and kind of brilliant. Performed by John Epperson and written by him and Justin Ross (who directed), it uses the rhetorical tactics of drag theatre to attack some of the Big Questions, managing not so much to raise lip-synching to an art as to transform aural montage into psychodrama. Certainly this is the strangest show in town. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives—Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Largely New York—It would be a mistake to assume that Bill Irwin's dance-mime extravaganza is fundamentally boring because it lacks words; in fact, it has the best "book" on Broadway. The piece is partly a sendup of theatrical technology, partly a comment on the ills that beset a pluralistic society, and partly a debate about art. Irwin puts onstage all the conflicts, tensions, and antagonisms of modern city life and resolves them by means of an invented language. His solution is unrealistic—it obtains only in a theatre—but what makes the message so uplifting is that to understand it you have to learn a new idiom. (5/15/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Laughing Matters—This comedy revue by the team of Wallem and Tolan is so consistently unfunny that it borders on the offensive. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 564-8038.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Caroline Lagerfelt, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks make up the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Light Opera of Manhattan—Presenting George M. Cohan's **Give My Regards to Broadway**, with some additional music and lyrics by Todd Ellison. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Aug. 6.)

Love Letters—Staged readings of A. R. Gurney's

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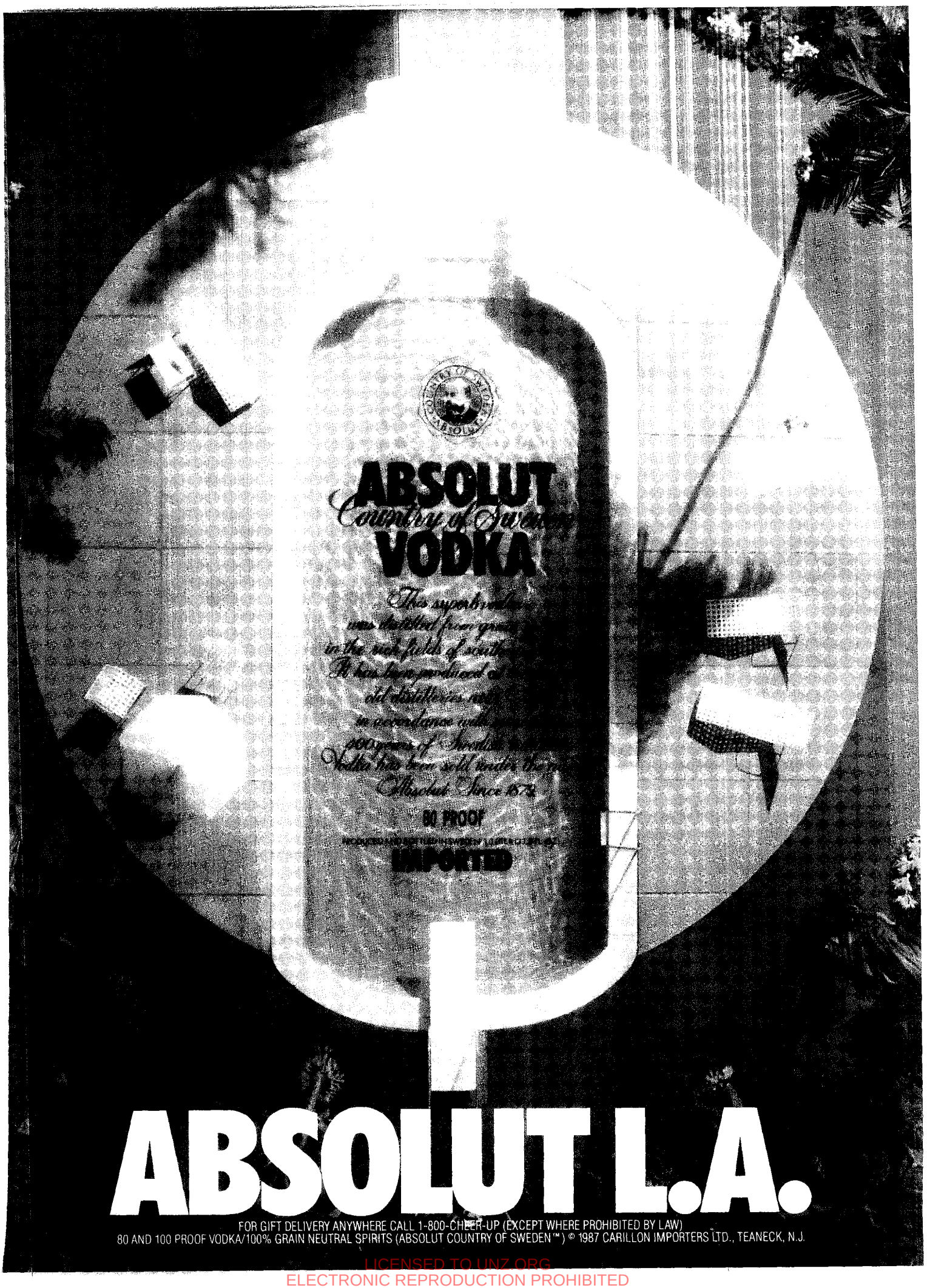

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Leslie Uggams in "Anything Goes"

two-character play. July 24, Elaine Stritch and Jason Robards, and July 30-31, Julie Harris and Richard Kiley. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) The characters are an aging Catskills type; a young comedy team still scrambling for a foothold; a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manager. All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Kevin Conway can seldom have been better or funnier than he is as Bronx-born Lawrence Garfinkle, and Janet Zarish plays his adversary (with a difference). They are ably supported by James Murtaugh and Arch Johnson. The performance as a whole is a credit to Gloria Muzio, who directed it. An import from the Hartford Stage Company. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Pixie Led—A play by Christopher Harris, loosely based on two Gogol stories. Presented by Union 212, a British company. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Rumors—This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by Ron Leibman, Joyce Van Patten, Charles Brown, and Cynthia Darlow, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (11/28/88) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/89) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Showing Off—As comedy revues go, this one—written by Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell—isn't at all bad. The winning performances by Mr. Bernstein, Marilyn Pasekoff, Mark Sawyer, and Veanne Cox often make the material seem better than it is, but ultimately they don't compensate for the over-all smugness of what is essentially lifestyle comedy. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

LONG RUNS

Anything Goes: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Leslie Uggams, Bill McCutcheon, and Gregg Edelman, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.) . . . **Cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A Chorus Line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **Driving Miss Daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **The Fantasticks:** The longest-running long run recently turned twenty-nine. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **Forbidden Broadway 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Dorothy Kiara, David B. McDonald, and Jeff Lyons. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **Into the Woods:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful and funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. The cast includes Nancy Dussault and Chip Zien. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363.) . . . **M. Butterfly:** David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play, with John Rubinstein and B. D. Wong. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **Me and My Girl:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. With James Brennan and Judy Blazer. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **Les Misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **Nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **Steel Magnolias:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress (Suzy Hunt), her assistant (Dorrie Joiner), and four steady customers (Bette Henritze, Anna Minot, Rosemary Prinz, and Cynthia Vance). (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

DANCE

WHEN Niels Bjørn Larsen was ballet master of the Royal Danish Ballet, he felt a responsibility to keep records of the company's repertory. So he made films (silent home movies) and detailed notes of the productions. One of them was the evening-length "Romeo and Juliet" that Sir Frederick Ashton made for the Danes in 1955, with success. (Ashton's biographer, David Vaughan, notes that at the première there were nine curtain calls, an event "virtually unprecedented in a theatre that traditionally had none at all.")

Ashton's "Romeo" is set to the famous Prokofiev score. Its emphasis on classical dance to carry much of the narrative places it apart from many other well-known versions—notably the Lavrovsky "Romeo" for the Bolshoi—that depend on robust dance-acting. Eventually, the Danes dropped Ashton's ballet; their "Romeo and Juliet" in current repertory was staged by John Neumeier. For many years, Ashton himself expressed diffidence about his "Romeo," and refused to help any attempts to revive it. In 1985, however, Peter Schaufuss, the director of London Festival Ballet, brought over Larsen to reconstruct the work, and managed to persuade Ashton to leave his self-imposed retirement in the country to attend rehearsals. Once Ashton arrived, he began to tinker with the choreography; by the première he had made substantial revisions and was coaching the dancers. It is his reconsidered "Romeo and Juliet" that L.F.B. brings to the Met this week, and not since "Hamlet" have England and Denmark been so closely linked. Niels Bjørn Larsen performs Lord Capulet in alternation with Alexander Grant. The distinguished Danish pedagogue Kirsten Ralov shares the role of Lady Capulet with Lynn Seymour and Freya Dominic. Frank Schaufuss, the original Mercutio, will play the Prince of Verona, and Peter Schaufuss—his son—will be one of the Romeos.

IN TOWN

London Festival Ballet—A two-week engagement. July 25 at 7, July 26-27 at 8, and July 29 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." . . . ¶ July 28 and July 31-Aug. 2, all at 8: "Land," "Anastasia" (with Lynn Seymour), and "Études." Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret will be present on opening night. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through Aug. 5.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 25-27: Laura Dean Dancers and Musicians. . . . ¶ July 28-29: Bill T. Jones/ Arnie Zane & Co. . . . ¶ Starting Aug. 1: The American Indian Dance Theatre and two Hawaiian dance groups. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE

THE question most often asked by Chris Isaak's fans is "Why isn't this guy more famous?" After all, he looks like the young Elvis, sings like Roy Orbison, writes lucid, sometimes haunting pop songs, and puts on live shows full of humor, solid musicianship, and high spirits. One possible answer is that nobody can quite figure Isaak out. Take, for instance, the flowered suit he wore at his Bottom Line performance the other night. These weren't subtle flowers but the big flashy kind that you might find in, say, the reception area of a "hot" ad agency. It's not the kind of suit you'd expect to find on an ex-amateur boxer from Stockton, California, a man whose blue-eyed, all-American good looks have been noticed not only by fashion editors but also by the hunk-struck photographer Bruce Weber, who put Isaak in his recent movie "Let's Get Lost" for no apparent reason other than to give you something to look at if you got tired of looking at Chet Baker.

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Isaak's stage show presents another paradox: how to reconcile the lonely crooner who sings of lost love and broken hearts with the performer who shouts to his guitarist, "Come on, Jimmy, you little love taco, play something!" (Isaak's ribbing of his bandmates is an essential part of the show. To his drummer: "Kenny, if you would just take off all your clothes, light yourself on fire, and walk across these tables, I think the audience would really respect you.") Perhaps the hardest thing to pin down about Isaak is his music. The consistent, high-gloss production of his albums (his third, "Heart Shaped World," was recently released by Warner Bros.) can obscure the fact that Isaak the songwriter is an inveterate genre-hopper. At the Bottom Line show, which ran for almost two hours, he was all over the place, offering rockabilly, country, a jazzy torch song, a rollicking Ventures medley, a Don Ho-style Hawaiian ditty, and, for his final number, the ersatz Spanish hymn "Vaya con Dios." "That means 'Where's the library?'" Isaak explained.

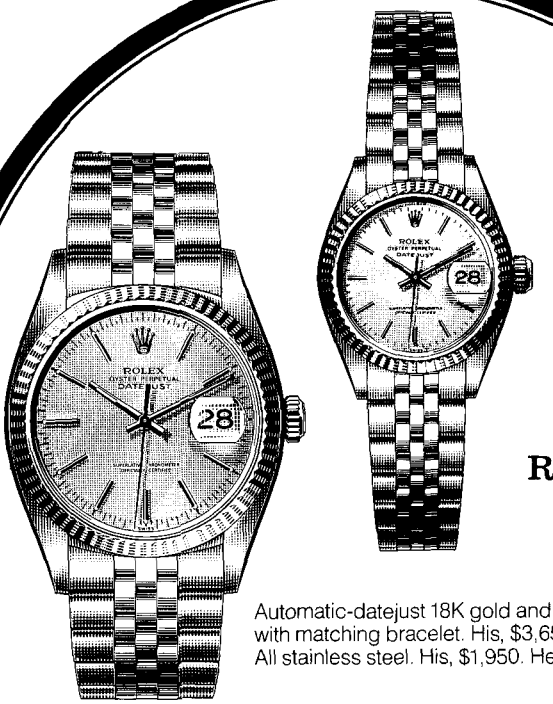
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry gentrification at the sight of the pastel walls, potted greenery, and bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. **JAMES MOODY,** a saxophonist and flutist who's had a long association with Dizzy Gillespie, chairs a quartet July 28-29, and bassist **LONNIE PLAXICO'S** trio steps in on July 30. The rest of the schedule: Russian pianist Zade on July 24; violinist Richard Carr on July 25; pianist **BENNY GREEN'S** trio on July 26; the Freddie Bryant quartet on July 27; the Brian Melvin quartet on July 31; Don Friedman's trio on Aug. 1; and the George Adams quartet on Aug. 2. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar—finally a club where they don't force you to drink—and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. The shifty guitarist **BILL FRISELL** will be here on July 25, and pop-rocker **RICHARD MARX** performs on July 26. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, tucked between a D'Agostino supermarket and a greengrocery. In 1969, when Bradley Cunningham and a partner bought it, it was called The Stirrup. Its light is distinctive, something between dim generic tavern light and refined haze; its patrons are famously gabby; its piano, which Paul Desmond bequeathed to Mr. Cunningham, has been played by many first-rate musicians, including Jimmy Rowles, Tommy Flanagan, and Dave McKenna. Pianist and Art Blakey alum **JAMES WILLIAMS** performs with bassist **JAMIL NASSER** through July 29; **HAROLD MABERN** goes to the bench for a week-long stint on July 31. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—The "great savory pot-au-feu called New York" (in the words of the great romantic



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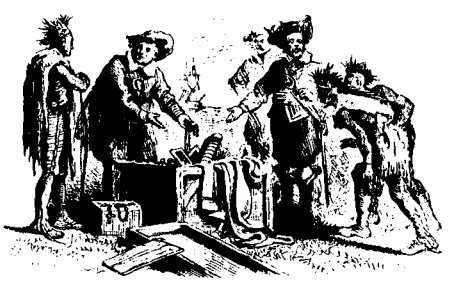

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NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

Duke Ellington) has loads of West Indian restaurants, but not too many that feature name-brand jazz bands. The hard-bopping **SOLOMONIC QUARTET** claims July 25-30. Blues and jazz singer Jean DuShon begins a two-week stint on Aug. 1. Music begins at about nine-thirty.

CAT CLUB, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. The dancers are young, old, middle-aged, semi-pro, one hundred per cent amateur, happy, earnest, in love; shoe styles (men's) run from white bucks to clod-hoppers to gleaming patent-leather jobs. The New York Swing Dance Society sponsors these affairs; on July 30, it brings in Bob January and his ensemble. Music from eight to midnight.

DELTA 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A long, rambling bar and restaurant with a white-trash-chicken-shack theme. The decorator went kind of hog-wild with all the old filling-station and soft-drink signs and the hubcaps and the dime-store portrait of the King and the display of dozer caps and the shingle from the taxidermist in Spanish Fort, Alabama—but it's a friendly enough place. On July 26, there's rhythm and blues with Diane Scanlon's Li'l Kitten and the Hounds of Love; the zydeco outfit **LOUP GAROU** performs on July 27; and the New Voices of Freedom, the gospel choir that helped Bono find what he was looking for in "Rattle and Hum," comes in on July 31. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or head-room in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. The jazz people: July 25-30, Elements; beginning Aug. 1, **EDDIE HARRIS,** a saxophonist who sometimes plays a trumpet with a saxophone reed or a sax with a trumpet mouthpiece. Harris has been known to stray into rock—in 1972, he put out a record with Jeff Beck and Steve Winwood. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romantic Manhattan. The pianists who pass through here are among Gotham's finest. **BUCKY** and **JOHN PIZZARELLI,** the only father-and-son seven-string-guitar team we know of, perform July 25-30; pianist **PETE MALINVERNI** comes in on July 31; and **DOROTHY DONEGAN,** jazz pianist and iconoclast, has a week-long gig beginning Aug. 1. In the forties, rumors spread that the young Donegan could play faster than Art Tatum, and when Tatum went to Chicago to check her out he was impressed enough to give her this bit of advice: "If it don't fit, don't force it." Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

INDIGO BLUES, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A sleek, modern jazz club, in the basement of the Hotel Edison, with glass brick, space-age carpeting, and long strips of cool-blue neon. **JON FADDIS,** a spirited trumpeter who favors the high end, performs July 25-30; the Marcus Roberts quartet begins a six-night run on Aug. 1.

J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side jazz room, one steep flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. The lineup: the Orphan News Boys Quartet, led by guitarist **MARTY GROSZ,** on July 25; the Lance Hayward trio on July 26; Brazilian Fantasy on July 27; singer Judy Barnett's foursome on July 28; clarinettist **KEN PEPLOWSKI** and friends on July 29; pianist Andy Tuck on July 31; and pianist **LYNN BERNSTEIN'S** trio on Aug. 2. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This upstairs music and performance space opened its doors in 1986 and quickly established itself as the headquarters of the downtown avant-garde music scene. (There wasn't much competition.) In the rear there's a mini-bar stocked with herbal tea and imported beer; up front is a small stage, which belongs to **RHYS CHATHAM** on July 24. Chatham is known for his minimalist guitar barrages; he also plays a mean gong. July 26-29, the eclectic Santa Cruz jokesters **CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN** merge with guitarist/wildman **EUGENE CHADBOURNE,** resulting in Camper Van Chadbourne. Music after nine.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes, panelled ceiling—has more of a country-club feel. **THELMA CARPENTER** and **HADDA BROOKS,** two vocalists who made their mark in the forties and fifties, are appearing here in a program billed as "Swing Street Legends." (Ms. Brooks is making her first New York appearance in thirty-five years.) Closed Sundays.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This rock establishment, which recently moved from the East Village to the former temple of excess Studio 54, is still a place where the customer is not always right. The signature feature of its previous address, the giant Big Brother video screen, has been preserved intact. Upstairs in the balcony, there are designated seating areas for industry and non-industry people. The exalted bluesman **B. B. KING** will be here on July 30, with his guitar, Lucille. **JOHN KAY & STEPPENWOLF,** a reincarnation of the Classic Rock group that gave the world "Born to Be Wild," lays claim to Aug. 1. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. **TOOTS & THE MAYTALS,** the long-lived reggae ensemble, lay down the beat through July 26; July 28 is the property of **MARIO RIVERA & THE SALSA REFUGEES;** and July 29 is ceded to **PÉ-DE-BOI.** Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Illinois Jacquet at the Village Vanguard

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a giant Louise Nevelson sculpture—salsa bands and their followers shuffle in on Mondays. **SID CAESAR** will be doing his comedy revue here until Sept. 24; Cuban-born conga player **MONGO SANTAMARIA** leads a band—with **JAMES MOODY** playing sax—on July 31. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, **LODI CARR** sings on Mondays, and **HELLMAN'S ANGELS,** a string trio headed by harpist **DAPHNE HELLMAN,** go to work on Tuesdays. Larry Goldings appears on Fridays from six, and the Audrey Blanding duo on Saturdays and Sundays from six.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. **ILLINOIS JACQUET,** the Houston-born tenor-sax man, will be here with his big band in tow July 25-30; a quartet belonging to **KENNY BURRELL,** a guitarist who has sat in on about two hundred recording sessions, takes over as of Aug. 1. Mondays are prime time for **MEL LEWIS'S** big band. Music from ten.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

FAVORED guests of Johnny Carson usually run behind his desk and give him a peck on the cheek. Almost no one gets behind the barricade created by David Letterman's veneered bunker, though Sandra Bernhard does. But Arsenio Hall doesn't have a desk, so his guests have no problem giving him the kind of hug adolescents usually receive when they begrudgingly attend family circles after a long beg-off; the difference is that Hall loves it. Not since Merv Griffin last introduced Hermione Gingold has there been as happy and effusive a late-night talk-show host.

But it isn't just the outpourings of affection that have Hall constantly beaming his Steinway smile or rubbing his helicopter-pad haircut (which he does whenever he blushes). "The Arsenio Hall Show" not only regularly bests "Late Night with David Letterman" in the ratings; it now occasionally overtakes "The Tonight Show," an achievement at one time as unthinkable as Cher's winning an Oscar. What's giving the producers of the other two talk shows pause is that Hall has zipped ahead without stealing their viewers. Instead, he has attracted a new audience, the one radio stations refer to as urban contemporary, people who would usually be somewhere else on a weeknight at midnight—out. Unlike his heartland-bred competitors, Hall knows the double meanings of "get busy," "give it up," and "throw down," which is why this new audience has found someone with whom they can "park it" for an hour. When these fans attend his show, they bring him the pictures they've dug up from his high-school yearbook and wear T-shirts they've made that feature his face. They love that Hall kicks off his shoes, laughs at what they laugh at, gushes the way they gush, and that he can dance. Even better, he has the kind of friends they'd like to have. Only when Eddie Murphy talks to his good buddy Arsenio does the No. 1 box-office draw in America admit that his nickname as a kid was Peas. Not everyone tells you this stuff. Usually just the people you hug.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

HELEN FRANKENTHALER'S high-priestess airs have got her in trouble in recent years. Her dogmatic insistence on the strictly visual qualities of her work, her often stated disdain for art of the last two decades, and her unwillingness to be any fun at all on the record have tended to remind young writers and artists of everything they came to resent about aggressive purists in general, and about Frankenthaler's once formidable early mentor, the critic Clement Greenberg, in particular. So Frankenthaler's retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art may come as a very pleasant surprise.

The earlier works—the stained, vaguely Orientalist paintings from the fifties and early sixties that put her on the map—are not, on the whole, her most impressive. Faced with the rose, mauve, and taupe blotchy smudges of "Arden" (1961), one may feel tempted to mutter, "Yeah, as in Elizabeth." But starting with work from the mid-sixties, when Frankenthaler began to paint fields of color, the show really takes off. The vivid-orange, burnt-ochre, deep-blue, and ecclesiastical-purple rectangles of a painting such as "Buddha's Court" (1964) announce the departure.

Frankenthaler is no quick-change artist, and there is a strong sense of the hothouse about this show. In the early seventies, for instance, she briefly favored thin black lines as punctuating devices in her broad washes of paint, and some of these works suggest the influence of Robert Motherwell, to whom she was then married. More recently, in "quiet" shades-of-gray paintings like "Casanova" and "Snow Queen," as well as in the brilliant-blue "Scarlatti" or the marvellously green "On the Cusp," the gestures of Chinese painting and Japanese theatre have made a mark. Lovers of abstract painting may note a startling resemblance between Frankenthaler's eighties paintings and the work of Stephen Mueller, a fellow Bennington College alum some twenty years her junior; these are the most exquisite orchids of all.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Thirty-six of Lucas Samaras's works on paper from the museum's collection are on view in the Berggruen Klee Gallery of the Wallace wing (the Klee works that are usually there are at the Tate Gallery for the summer). Through Sept. 5. . . . ¶ "Apropos Aprons," a presentation of the Costume Institute, considers not the workaday item but apron extremes—extremely ornate examples from eighteenth-century Europe, and the extremely short Rudi Gernreich mini (1967), not to mention the Egyptian noblewoman's funerary apron, and various loincloths, girdles, pinafores, and pendant sashes. Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ An exhibition comparing photographs of the sixties with photographs of the eighties, including works by Duane Michals, Cindy Sherman, and the Starn Twins. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Forty paintings by Helen Frankenthaler. Through Aug. 20. . . . ¶ Twenty-five sculptures and fifteen drawings by Christopher Wilmarth (1943-87). A compact and exceptionally discomfiting retrospective. The artist's green-glass structures from the late sixties and seventies are elegant but utterly mute. The late work—mostly bronze wall reliefs with ovoid etched-glass "heads"—offers about as despairing a vision of the self as you are likely to find. Through Aug. 20. (A complementary show is at Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.) . . . ¶ An installation by Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio. Through Aug. 15. . . . ¶ "California Photography: Remaking Make-Believe." An exhibition of about forty-five recent works by John Baldessari, Nancy Barton, Jo Ann Callis, John Divola, Robert Heinecken, Larry Johnson, and Larry Sultan. All of the artists reside in California. Through Aug. 20. . . . ¶ Photographs by Aaron Siskind from the permanent collection. . . . **NOTE:** The musuem's sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., is open, free, on Fridays and Saturdays from 6 to 10, with musicians from the Juilliard School performing at 7:30. (The museum is open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—This summer, the Frank Lloyd Wright spiral has been given over to selections from the permanent collection. Picasso, Kandinsky, and Klee are well represented, as is Richard Long, whose sculpture "Red Slate Circle" sits on the rotunda floor; among the other exhibitors are contemporary sculptors Phoebe Adams, Ange Leccia, Robert Lobe, and David Nash. Through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A show of oils, watercolors, prints, and drawings by Edward Hopper. The hundred and fifty works span the artist's career, and are drawn from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ "Art in Place" is a thematically arranged show of three hundred works that have entered the permanent collection over the past fifteen years. They range from a 1901 watercolor by Maurice Prendergast to a 1988 aluminum sculpture by John Newman. Starts July 28. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—"Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures." Through Sept. 18. . . . ¶ "Hispanic Art in the United States: Thirty Contemporary Painters & Sculptors." . . . Concurrent with the Hispanic show is a forceful lobby installation by Alfredo Jaar, a Chilean artist living in New York. It consists of light boxes that look like black beams edged in photographic transparencies of United States civil-rights protesters, including picketers carrying signs that read "I *AM* A MAN" and a young black man with part of his face done up in white makeup. The artfully haphazard arrangement of beams argues effectively for anti-authoritarianism in both life and art. Through Sept. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A display of Saudi Arabian dress in which traditional *thawbs*, for instance, are seen alongside a cloak that belonged to King Faisal. Starts July 28. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM, 40 W. 53rd St.—A show of furniture by George Nakashima, a woodworker who favors an organic approach to tables, chairs, cabinets, and lamps. Through Aug. 20. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—The most recent installation of works of art from the exemplary collection of John D. Rockefeller 3rd (the society's initial benefactor) highlights fine Chinese and Japanese porcelains, such as a grouping of small translucent celadon bowls and a large Ming water jar depicting fish swimming among aquatic plants. There are also Hindu and Buddhist sculptures, mostly from India, and particularly enthralling are several Khmer stone statues, with their idealized naturalism, classically smooth surfaces, and utterly placid serenity masking what was a brutal warrior society. . . . ¶ A display of thirty-five porcelains provides a good, if somewhat cursory, introduction to delicate work made during the Korean Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910). Both shows will be on view through Sept. 3. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Concourse—Red Grooms. His work is about as close as art gets to real entertainment, and his graphic work—the subject of this exhibition—is no exception. Included are some delightful three-dimensional lithographs that resemble permanently opened pop-up books. Through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ Sculptor Mierle Laderman Ukeles is showing works made with recycled materials—crushed soda cans, pulped Christmas trees, and shredded Wella Balsam containers. Through Sept. 4. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—

SMILE

There are no reruns on any of the seven video monitors in "para-site," an architectural installation by Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio, which is on view through August 15 in the Projects Room at the Museum of Modern Art. In fact, the only thing that's being repeated here is MOMA's commitment—somewhat slack in recent years—to present brilliant, trailblazing ways of making architecture. "Para-site" takes up the slack with spare, cool, "functional" design about the function of looking—the perfect subject for a place that was established so people could see what was now. "Para-site" 's emphasis is also on discovery. With its cutaway wall, video monitors, convex mirrors, and surveillance cameras scanning the museum's revolving doors and escalators, this could be the central security office of a Society for the Prevention of Déjà Vu.

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Red Grooms

"Polished Perfection: The Art of Turned-Wood Bowls." In the nineteen-thirties and forties, almost as an afterthought to the Industrial Revolution, factory mass production displaced the artisan and his lathe in the creation of wood bowls. This show, of eighty works by twenty-one contemporary North American craftsmen (along with four bowls by four unknown Early American settlers), proves that the artisanal tradition has survived. Starts July 25. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—A show of objects from ancient Israel which includes a mosaic floor excavated from a site near Haifa. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Words of Blood, Images of Fire," a tribute to the French Revolution, includes Robespierre's holograph of a speech Saint-Just gave attacking Danton; a sketch (attributed to David) of Robespierre on the day of his execution; and letters, more speeches, and memoranda. Through Aug. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, 2 Lincoln Square (entrance on Columbus Ave. between 65th and 66th Sts.)—A show of pre-Civil War African-American textiles, including appliquéd quilts, handwoven coverlets, and dresses. Through Sept. 17. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—The Berg Collection has mounted a presentation of mostly letters and manuscripts in which poets and novelists from Chaucer to Bellow ruminate on love and death. Several of the selections are from works too often cited ("Romeo and Juliet," "Death Be Not Proud"), while others (excerpts from Defoe's "Journal of the Plague Year," various notices written on mourning stationery) seem to lack insight into the themes. But a few fresh, urgent passages add depth and wit to the show: a series of love letters by Clifford Odets, in which he writes of rolling around in the grass and of the meaning of life; "Who's Most Afraid of Death?," a haunting poem by E. E. Cummings (inscribed to his wife) that achieves a near-perfect unity of love and death; and a group of three letters from an aggrieved Charles Dickens, all of which announce to his friends the passing of his beloved pet, Grip the raven: "My dear sir . . . Grip is no more." (Berg Collection Exhibition Room. Open daily, except Thursdays and Sundays, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Botanical illustrations from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, among them Georg Ehret's colored engraving "Yucca Aloifolia," a couple of Redouté watercolors and prints of his work from "Les Roses" and "Les Liliacées," and watercolors by Lilian Snelling, Mary Grierson, and Pandora Sellars. Through Sept. 2. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 6.)

Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum, 32-37 Vernon Blvd., at 33rd Road, Long Island City—Noguchi, one of the twentieth century's singular talents, designed this oasis for more than two hundred and fifty of his sculptures. It contains a wide range of his work—from the early surrealistic biomorphic pieces through several types of stone carvings—and documentation of his prodigious public art. The centerpiece of the museum is a peaceful ivy-walled garden dotted with sculptures. (Open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Graphics and installations that incorporate photography, the work of fifteen contemporary artists. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings, from the past four decades, by the African-American realist Hughie Lee-Smith. Both shows through Sept. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Christopher Wilmarth (1943-87)—This exhibition is a coda to the MOMA retrospective, with an emphasis on drawings rather than sculptures. The early-seventies paper pieces with folds and staples are especially good—sensuous and succinct. The later, figurative works are sometimes powerful but suggest an acrid emotionalism. Through Aug. 20. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Center for African Art—"Wild Spirits Strong Medicine: African Art and the Wilderness." A provocative display of artifacts. It begins with pairs of objects which illustrate the contrasts between village life and wilderness, or bush, life. The village objects are refined and domesticated; the others are aggressive and exaggerated. Additional exhibits related to the wild include an extraordinary fifteen-foot snake mask. Through Aug. 13. (54 E. 68th St. Open daily except Mondays; opens Sundays at noon.)

Four Icelandic Artists—Jón Axel Björnsson is an expressionistic painter, and his wife, Sóley Eiríksdóttir, makes odd, linear figure sculptures in black concrete. Kolbrún Björgólfsdóttir, a ceramist, shows cones and pyramids with a brown-spotted glaze, while her husband, Magnús Kjartansson, is represented by ambiguous work—simultaneously abstract and Pop—painted on paper. Through July 28. (American-Scandinavian Foundation, 127 E. 73rd St.)

Group Show—The York's main gallery is given over to stiff and provincial American landscape and figurative paintings of the nineteenth century, but the entranceway is devoted to work from the early twentieth century that displays a more engaged idea of culture: an ink sketch of New York by Stuart Davis, a watercolor of a house in the snow by Charles Burchfield, a painting of a lively urban crowd by Guy Pène du Bois, a brooding still-life by Marsden Hartley, and a composition of interlocking trapezoids by Charles Shaw. Through Sept. 1. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Public Domain—There's a political edge to all the works in this odd exhibition of exemplary public-oriented art. Richard Artschwager is represented by a model for an ambitious public sculpture—a plaza, actually—which consists of a windowed monolith that can be viewed on one side from an armchair and on the other from three very tall straight-backed chairs; the grouping is as dramatic and rigid as Fascist architecture. In a more populist spirit, Dennis Adams displays the model of a bus shelter he constructed for Toronto; its illuminated panel depicts native North Americans protesting for land rights on the steps of the Peace Tower, in Ottawa, while Mounties block the building's entrance. An eloquent defense of art as a catalyst for public exchange is to be found in Hans Haacke's photo-panels with text, which document a work he installed in a Graz square last year—the piece confronted Austrians with their collaboration with the Nazis—and the intense, opposing reactions to it, which included a firebombing. Through Aug. 18. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Artists' Artists"—Recent drawings and monotypes by Joseph Goldyne and Joyce Treiman. Revered predecessors such as William Merritt Chase, Winslow Homer, and Gustave Caillebotte are given their due by these two literal and unleavened realists. Caveat emptor: Treiman, with a self-portrait, has put herself into this pantheon. Through July 28. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St.)

Group Shows—At **Marian Goodman,** 24 W. 57th St.: Sculpture with conceptual tendencies, from 1968 to the present, by such artists as Lothar Baumgarten, Luciana Fabro, Rebecca Horn, Claes Oldenburg, Giulio Paolini, Giuseppe Penone, and Lawrence Weiner. Artschwager's filing cabinet, with its motif of ornaments suggesting winged messengers at different stages of alertness and exhaustion, may elicit the quickest smile in this altogether witty and elegant show. Through July 28. . . . **Marlborough,** 40 W. 57th St.: A big sampler of mostly gallery artists, many represented by work with a summer theme. Of these, Larry Rivers' two portraits—of a jazz musician naked in his hot hotel room, and of a woman in shorts lolling languorously on a porch—make the best, sultriest point. Through Sept. 16. . . . **Pace,** 32 E. 57th St.: "Sculpture by Painters," many of whom are gallery artists, including Condo, de Kooning, Dine, Dubuffet, Johns, Kelly, Lichtenstein, Miró, Morley, Newman, Picasso, Schnabel, Twombly, and Warhol. Condo, who is new to the medium, makes an auspicious début in this handsome exhibition. Through Sept. 1. . . . **Galerie St. Etienne,** 24 W. 57th St.: A show honoring Otto Kallir, the founder of the Galerie St. Etienne, as much for his pioneering exhibitions of the Austrian Expressionists as for his fascination with the documentation of this century's profound events. In addition to a gorgeous watercolor of a girl by Emil Nolde, an intense self-portrait by the little-known Richard Gerstl (whom Kallir discovered after the artist committed suicide at age twenty-five), and some fascinating paintings by the composer Arnold Schoenberg, we see Charles Lindbergh's application for an airplane license, Robert E. Peary's telegram confirming the "discovery" of the North Pole, and written recollections of Adolf Hitler, the artist, by Reinhold Hanisch. Hanisch sold Hitler's watercolors in the teens, and in the thirties was Kallir's restorer, prior to the dealer's flight from his native Austria. Through Sept. 8. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **Ruth Siegel,** 24 W. 57th St.: A full yet dreary exhibition of mostly academic landscape paintings. Virtually every vista except

Eric Bainbridge

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oceans white with foam is on view; only Earl Staley depicts a place we might want to experience. If this show were used as a case study in the nature-versus-culture debate, there is no doubt which viewpoint would win. Through Aug. 31. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **ZABRISKIE,** 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.: In this grouping of contemporary sculptures, Marja Vallila's portable steel altars with cast-iron twigs and rocks are stilted and gimmicky, and Tom Bills' rusted-steel-and-lead sculptures look like little more than crotches on his nicely crafted tables. Only Mia Westerlund Roosen holds the imagination, with her pounded-lead abstractions. Through Aug. 18.

GALLERIES—SoHo

YURY DYSHLENKO—Big recent paintings, in a hyper-realistic but non-static street-photographer style, which seems to build from earlier, officially approved Soviet realist genres while avoiding any sense of monumentalism. These are interesting, anxious pictures. Through July 28. (Kind, 136 Greene St. Closed Mondays.)

ROY LICHTENSTEIN—This invigorating exhibition brings together all of the Pop master's bronzes (1976-89), an underappreciated aspect of his oeuvre. Such classic Lichtenstein images as mirrors, brushstrokes, and drinking glasses are flat pictorial reliefs that have to do more with Cubist painting than with sculpture in the round. The bronzes have all the charm and wit of the artist's best paintings and are marvels of abstract composition. Through July 29. (65 Thompson Street Gallery. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

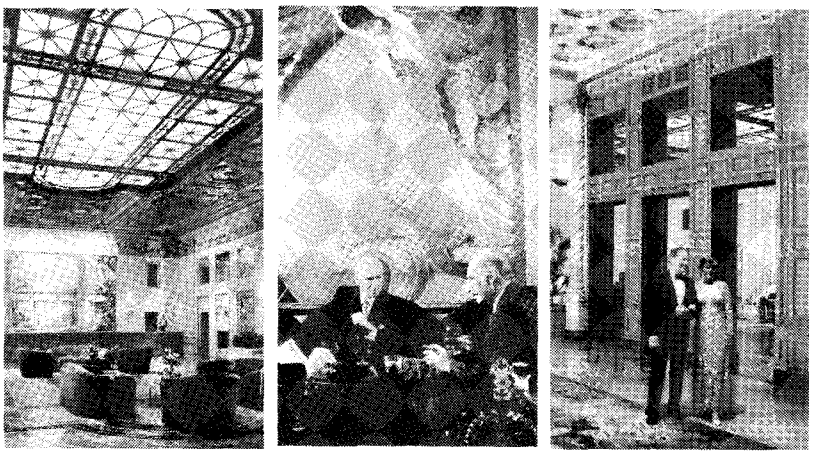
KEN WARNEKE—A wall of purple portraits on stark white backgrounds—some of people in mundane rituals, like mopping or dressing, others of private behavior, like vomiting or being gagged and bound to a chair—deliver a disturbing, deadpan portrait of plainly neurotic life. Through July 28. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 532 Broadway. Closed Mondays.)

AMERICAN PI(E)—This theme show attempts to say something expansive and ironic about the United States but is simply convoluted. An otherwise uninteresting painting by Adam Cvijanovic—of the Whitney Museum, with trees sprouting from its cracks, in an overgrown forest reclaimed by Native Americans—says it all. Through July 28. (Cutler, 593 Broadway.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **ALA,** 560 Broadway: The six artists here have worked in various materials, but in these sculptures and paintings fake fur is king. Pino Pascali, an Arte Povera artist who died in 1968, covered large wood zigzag panels with it to form a very phallic-looking worm that is more than thirty feet long. Eric Bainbridge used it to swathe a huge animal sculpture, "The Twentieth Century," that has a duck's body, a bunny's tail, a mechanical nut for a head, and suction cups

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

It's a little weird that the Ellis Island Foundation is turning Ellis Island into a museum just as the bulldozers are gearing up to tear down Times Square. Haven't they noticed that Times Square may be the closest thing we have to an Ellis Island today? It's a port of entry into the city (via subway instead of ship) for many, including the "tempest-tossed" that Miss Liberty calls for in the celebrated Emma Lazarus poem. Or maybe they have noticed the analogy between the two places and that's the problem: Times Square hasn't got a harbor around it to provide a visual cordon sanitaire. *Ellis Island deserves all the fuss being lavished on the reconstruction of its buildings, particularly if it ends up reminding the city planners that the point of the Golden Door was not that it was golden but that it was a door.*



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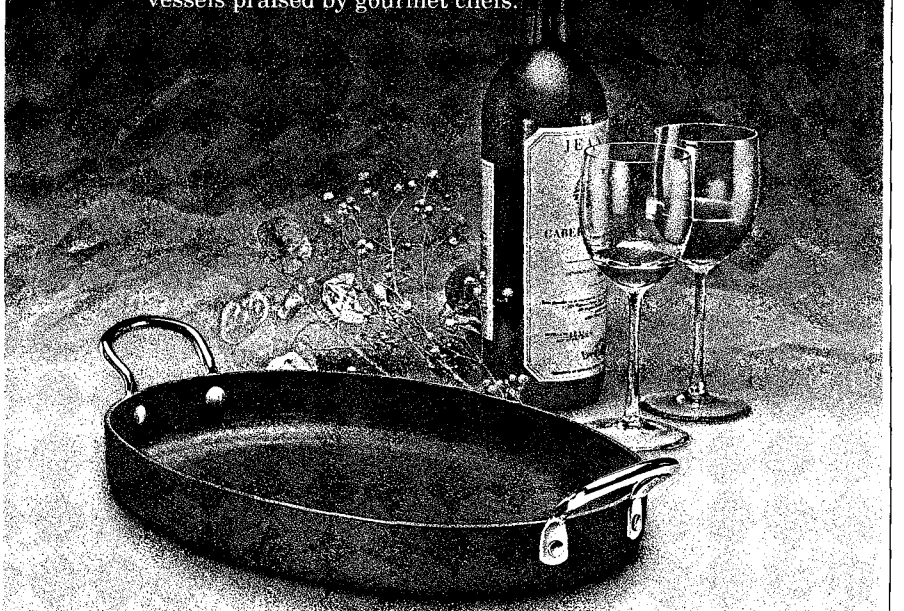

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ART–Cont'd

for feet. It is part Trojan horse, part Tower of Babel, and part Frankenstein's monster. Through July 28. . . . **ALEXANDER,** 59 Wooster St.: A show of landscape paintings that includes a number of interesting works—Sylvia Plimack Mangold's depiction of a breezy, feathery mass of trees, for example, which has luscious paint scraped about its surface and is edged in the artist's signature faux masking tape; and Robin Winters' large enigmatic landscape that is stratified in the manner of the stepped Mayan-like pyramid atop it. Among others represented are Robert Bordo and Louisa Chase. Through Aug. 11. . . . **GORNEY,** 100 Greene St.: A certain historicism prevails here: straightforward, moody photographs by James Welling of some wonderful buildings by the American architect H. H. Richardson; Justen Ladda's perspectival trick piece, involving two male figures, a chair, and what is meant to suggest a mirror; a black-and-white painting by Peter Nagy that's a kind of graphic version of an Intimist interior; a beautiful small fountain by R. M. Fischer cast in industrial metals and made up of shapes that evoke the fixtures of days gone by; and the pièce de résistance, Joel Otterson's "Coffeetable Museum," a friendly, semifunctional beverage caddie constructed with copper pipes, a big slab of natural-burled wood, and dozens of cups, saucers, teapots, and coffee makers representing a wide variety of brewing techniques, nationalities, and period styles—a veritable table of babble for the civilized sipper. Through July 28. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **LENNON, WEINBERG,** 580 Broadway: Works on paper by Joan Mitchell, Willem de Kooning, John Chamberlain, Brice Marden, Malcolm Morley, Louise Fishman, Donald Lipski, Chuck Connelly, Catherine Murphy, and H. C. Westermann. Lipski—always peculiar—and the weird, wondrous Westermann deliver interesting quirks. Through Aug. 11. . . . **P.P.O.W,** 532 Broadway: Nature-related photographs, paintings, and sculptures that are light and relatively uninteresting. Exceptions are Vincent Shine's fragments of plants pinned to the wall—these are simple and fragile and look authentic but are composed of synthetic materials. Through July 28. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **WEBER,** 142 Greene St.: Members of what we are meant to see as two generations of conceptual artists are united in this summer gathering. The oldies take the cake: Sol LeWitt's white box structure from 1969–75, Daniel Buren's "A Frame in a Frame in a Frame for a Frame"—a site-specific wall piece of asymmetrically arranged yellow beach-awning stripes against a slate-colored wall—and Hamish Fulton's framed photographs of wildernesses where he walked, are very elegant works, each quite coolly sublime in its way. Works in mixed media by Franz Erhard Walther, Wallace & Donohue, Massimo Antonaci, and Magdalena Jetelová—the younger guard—look pretty good, too, but a little gimmicky and unfocussed by comparison. Also, in the small gallery, there are beautiful prints by Robert Ryman, theologist of colors white. Through Aug. 25.

OTHER GALLERIES

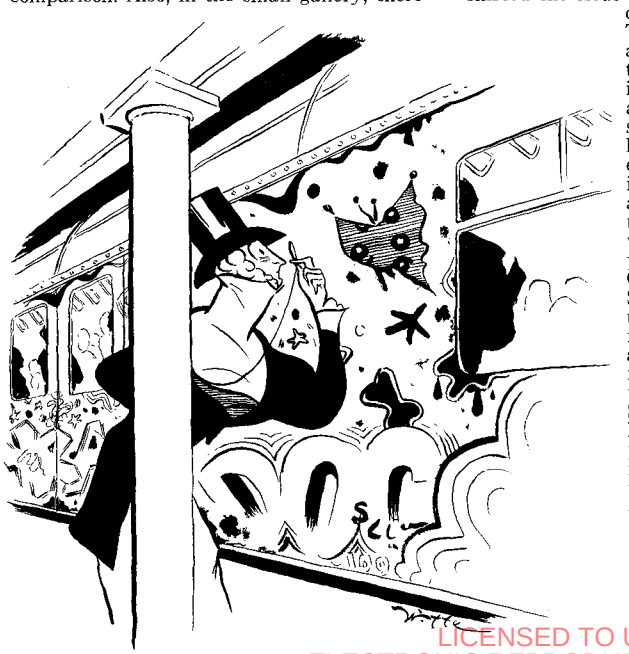
JUDE SCHWENDENWIEN—Large-scale drawings of original cartoons about this artist's need to be a hero in his own fictive space. One of them includes both a comic-book cover titled "Tales from the ID" and the phrase "Stop him!! He just shot my alterego and ruined my party at M.K.!!" Through July 28. (Bromm, 90 West Broadway.)

"ROTTEN TO THE CORE"—The title for a show of original drawings—by Robert Crumb, Spain Rodriguez, Rick Griffin, and others—for the latest issue of the comic book *ZAP.* Through Aug. 6. (Psychedelic Solution Gallery, 33 W. 8th St. Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 8.)

"LITERACY ON THE TABLE"—An admirably integrated exhibition of primarily multi-media works that address cultural literacy in relation to "otherness." In "See Me Jump," Clarissa T. Sligh rewrites Dick and Jane from a black perspective, and Edgar Heap of Birds, in a series of drawings, emblazons his Native American identity with such words as TRIBE UPON BACK. Through Aug. 26. (Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

THE ANCHORAGE—Each summer, Creative Time offers artists the opportunity to create large-scale installations in a barrel-vaulted brick space beneath the Brooklyn Bridge. Under other conditions this year's works might wear thin, but here they seem appropriate and entertaining: a plant-filled mini-Pantheon made of abandoned refrigerators, air-conditioners, and plastic (by Bob Bingham); an algae-covered curtain with water cascading down it (by David Nyzio); and low-hanging electric lamps that pulse and sway back and forth in various rhythms (by Fred Tomaselli). There are also several sound environments, including a corridor of clopping horses by Vida and a delightful makeshift orchestra by Yoshi Wada and Terry Fox. The most refreshing and full-bodied work is at the entrance and is not part of the show: a three-panel poster by Gran Fury—intended for New York City buses—of kissing couples that reads "KISSING DOESN'T KILL: GREED AND INDIFFERENCE DO." Through Aug. 13. (Cadman Plaza West at Front St., Brooklyn. Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

NEW PUBLIC ART—The two newest permanent public sculptures at Battery Park City are modest and intelligent additions to a culture capital not known for its public-art enlightenment. Between the two main residential blocks, where Rector Park meets the Esplanade, R. M. Fischer has erected "Rector Gate," a metal archway that pays homage to New York City's now virtually nonexistent tradition of fine decorative metalwork with touches of Flash Gordon whimsy. The gate is both monumental and human-scaled, and manages to respect its setting without being subservient to it. A block south, on West Thames Street, Richard Artschwager has skirted the issue of the huge and somewhat daunting scale of the site. There he has situated usable seating, including solitary granite chairs; huge, inviting wood lounge chairs; and stainless-steel circular seating with a table that looks like the coils of an electric stove. The grouping is intimate (rare for public art), and one has the sense that it can accommodate those in search of either play or seclusion.



GROUP SHOW—From Peter Schuyff's neo-Op abstraction to Donald Baechler's faux-infantile figuration, and including Ford Beckman's stilted post-conceptual post-minimalism, Shengé Ka Pharoah's post-Basquiat streaked neo-expressionism, and even Olivier Mosset's mock-Halley vibrating geometric-abstraction, most of the works in this show have the late-eighties "look," but leave the viewer craving less hipness. Through July 28. (Baghoomian, 611 Broadway.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

SHOEBOXES have yet again turned out to contain buried treasure. A few years ago, when Sidney D. Gamble's relatives were going through his closet, they looked inside some shoeboxes that had been there for fifty years and discovered old China instead of used leather. This find—made up of more than four thousand negatives, hand-colored slides, and reels of film, all shot by Gamble in China between 1917 and 1932—is both historical and personal. Judging from the small selection of these images now on view at the China Institute, the archive is of interest in many respects. Gamble was more than a rich American tourist popping by (although he was a Gamble of Procter & Gamble); a sociologist, he spent years in China trying to understand it, writing about it, and taking pictures.

The exhibition of his photographs shows an observer who was interested in capturing both tradition and change, and who knew that for an outsider to perceive and record this culture with any kind of depth he had to study the details of daily life. Two pictures of student demonstrations in the show—titled "China Between Revolutions"—vibrate especially in terms of the present. It is very hard to look at them without flashing on the recent, much more brutal images that came across the wires several weeks ago, and that then stopped dead.

JOHN EBERSON (1875-1954)—In the twenties, Eberson designed theatres that were decorated as Moorish fantasies, or had qualities found in Persian or Italian architecture; here are technical drawings and photographs of several of them. Through July 28. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

JOHN L. MURPHY / FRED W. MCDARRAH—Murphy gets the ideas for his studio-made tableaux from studying goings on at Coney Island. / Black-and-white photographs taken in Greenwich Village in the nineteen-fifties and sixties and portraits of some of the figures (Bob Dylan, Jack Kerouac, Franz Kline) who worked there then. Through Aug. 6. (Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park, Flushing. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 10 to 5; Thursdays, 10 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

STEPHEN SHORE / NANCY HELLEBRAND—Rich color and crisp detail are what come to mind when we think about Shore's work, and these landscapes taken in Scotland and Texas are no exception. They certainly have a virtuoso technique, but they feel a bit too obedient to what is expected of a serious photographer at present. / Hellebrand's images of writing are dynamic examples of photography as drawing. The background textures have the effect of making the sweeps of line look as if they were on handmade paper, thus reinforcing our sense of the presence of the hand. Some of the writing in these pictures is legible, some is not; sometimes the more abstract markings look like lines in a graph, and sometimes like calligraphy. Through Aug. 30. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St.)

SHORT LIST—**THOMAS FREDERICK ARNDT,** Photofind, 138 Spring St., opens at noon Tuesdays through Fridays (through Aug. 4); **MARTINE FRANCK,** French Institute–Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St., open Saturdays (through Aug. 31); **SIDNEY D. GAMBLE,** China Institute, 125 E. 65th St. (through Sept. 8); **DAVID JOYCE** and **TINA WHITE,** Pfeifer, 568 Broadway (through July 28); **ROBERT SHEEHAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway, opens at noon on Saturdays (through Aug. 25); **AARON SISKIND,** Museum of Modern Art, closed Wednesdays (through Oct. 10); **TODD WATTS,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through July 28).

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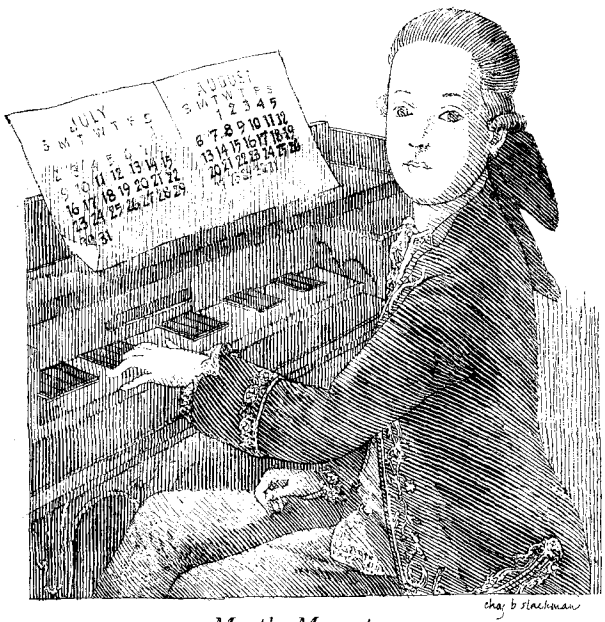

Mostly Mozart

MUSIC

A FEW years ago, Jonathan Miller began to let it be known that he was looking for a place in America to direct opera on a regular basis—not the rough-and-tumble of a major house but a company that could offer him long rehearsals, stable casting, intimate surroundings. Perhaps beautiful scenery (outside the opera house, we mean) played a part in his requirements as well; at any rate, he has settled, for now, on the Glimmerglass Opera, in Cooperstown, New York. He has also settled this year on an essential and elusive masterpiece that he has staged before, "La Traviata," an opera that is relatively easy to do but in the past couple of decades has proved almost impossible to do really well.

The cast is young-American (Stephanie Friede, James Schwisow), instead of star-international. The setting, according to the press release, is "Paris and vicinity, 1846." That is pretty much the original setting; apparently, it is Dr. Miller's opinion that some audiences are still capable of responding to a portrayal of events from past eras. The singing will be in Edmund Tracey's English translation; the conductor is Stewart Robertson.

The press release also discloses Dr. Miller's view that "the opera needs to be intimate," because "if it's too grand, no one will care about what happens to these people." So much for those who care what happens to Aeneas or the Marquis de Posa, but never mind; the first point is valid. The set, by Bernard Culshaw, is advertised as "simple, uncluttered, dramatically lit." This could be a memory to hold in store against a long siege; soon, and for a long time to come, the Metropolitan will be giving "Traviata" in a Franco Zeffirelli based-on-the-movie production. No one expects it to be either intimate or uncluttered. Performances in Cooperstown began July 22, and will continue at intervals through August 7.

IN TOWN

New York City Opera—**CARMEN,** with Wendy White, Margaret Cusack, John Absalom, and Kenneth Shaw; conducted by Hal France. (July 25 and Aug. 2 at 8.) . . . **DON GIOVANNI,** with Elizabeth Holleque, Frances Ginsberg, Erie Mills, and John Cheek; Sergiu Comissiona. (July 26 at 8.) . . . **THE MERRY WIDOW,** with Claudia Cummings, Jane Bunnell, Louis Otey, and Mark Thomsen; Imre Pallo. (July 27 and Aug. 1 at 8.) . . . **DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE,** with Elizabeth Hynes, Elizabeth Carter, Walter MacNeil, and Stephen Dickson; Scott Bergeson. (July 28 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with Maureen O'Flynn, Susanne Marsee, Pablo Elvira, and Paul Hartfield; Scott Bergeson. (July 29 at 2.) . . . **THE MIKADO,** with Lisa Saffer, Lisbeth Lloyd, Richard McKee, and Paul Austin Kelly; Peter Howard. (July 29 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—July 24 at 8: John Nelson conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Kathleen Battle, soprano. . . . ¶ July 25-26 at 8: David Zinman conducting the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra, with Vladimir Spivakov, violin, and Maria João Pires, piano. . . . ¶ July 27 at 8: Chamber music, with Mr. Spivakov, violin; Ms. Pires, piano; Paul Neubauer, viola; Paula Robison, flute; and Yuli Turovsky, cello. . . . ¶ July 28-29 at 8: Peter Maag conducting the festival orchestra in a program that includes a Mozart piano concerto and a cello concerto by Jean-Baptiste Johnson. With Stephen Hough, piano, and Janos Starker, cello. . . . ¶ July 30 at 7:30: The Canadian Brass and brass players from the New York Philharmonic. . . . ¶ July 31 at 8: Chamber music, with the Takács String Quartet; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; and Vladimir Feltsman, piano. . . . ¶ Aug. 1-2 at 8: Edo de Waart conducting the festival orchestra, with the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson trio and Håkan Hardenberger, trumpet. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Through Aug. 26.)

New York Philharmonic—In its annual series of free outdoor concerts. Hugh Wolff conducting a Berlioz-Prokofiev-Dvořák program. **CROCHERON PARK,** Queens: July 27. . . . **VAN CORTLANDT PARK,** the Bronx: July 28. . . . **CENTRAL PARK'S GREAT LAWN:** July 31. . . . **PROSPECT PARK,** Brooklyn: Aug. 1. . . . **SNUG HARBOR,** Staten Island: Aug. 2. (Evenings at 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor Music Festival—July 27 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble in a Weber-Rossini-Mozart program. . . . ¶ July 28 at 9: Lydia Artymiw, piano, in a solo recital of works by Scarlatti, Schumann, and Beethoven. . . . ¶ July 29 at 8:30: John Nelson conducting the Orchestra of St. Luke's, with Kathleen Battle, soprano, and Elizabeth Mann, flute. . . . ¶ July 30 at 5:30: Shirley Verrett, soprano, and Warren George Wilson, piano. (Katonah, N.Y. Through Aug. 20. Trains that leave Grand Central on Saturdays at 2:48 and 5:48, and on Sundays at 3:48, are met at Katonah by buses for Caramoor. For information about tickets and trains, call 1-914 232-5035.)

Tanglewood—July 27 at 8:30: The Takács String Quartet playing works by Vsolt Durko, Haydn, and Dvořák. . . . ¶ July 28 at 9: Yuri Temirkanov conducting the Boston Symphony Orchestra in a program of works by Anatol Liadov, Prokofiev, and Sibelius. . . . ¶ July 29 at 8:30: Yuri Temirkanov conducting the orchestra, with John Lill, piano. . . . ¶ July 30 at 2:30: Eduardo Mata conducting the orchestra in a Tchaikovsky-Copland program. With Itzhak Perlman, violin. (Lenox, Mass. Through Aug. 27. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1940.)

Glimmerglass Opera—"La Traviata," conducted by Stewart Robertson, with Stephanie Friede, soprano; James Schwisow, tenor; and Brian Steele, baritone. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 1-607 547-2255. July 26, July 28, and Aug. 1 at 8; July 30 at 2:30.)

JAZZ / POP / ROCK

Julian Lennon—Very enthusiastic (if not screaming) young girls in the audience and a singing voice that is an uncanny replication of his own might be two small jokes played by John Lennon on his son, except that the absence of the Fab Four in the memories of a new crop of fans will make this concert simply an evening of sensitive songs for romantic teens and young adults, and not even faintly subversive. Julian Lennon is twenty-six and has already released three best-selling albums of very professional keyboard-driven eighties pop-rock. Admirers of those records will enjoy this show, even if they don't screech and faint. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Aug. 2 at 8.)

Howard Jones—With Midge Ure. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. July 27 at 8.)

Fela Anikulapo Kuti & the Egypt 80 Orchestra—Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. July 28 at 8.

"Jazz in July"—Final performances of the series. July 25: Panama Francis and the Savoy Sultans, Frank Vignola and the Hot Club Quintette, Carol Woods, Dick Hyman, and Norma Miller and her Jazz Dancers. . . . ¶ July 26: Joe (Flip) Phillips, Howard Alden, Kenny Davern, Joe Wilder, Dick Sudhalter, Urbie Green, and many others. . . . ¶ July 27: Mr. Hyman, Roger Kellaway, Derek Smith, Bill Charlap, Milt Hinton, and Butch Miles. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Evenings at 8.)

ARTS FESTIVALS

Summerfare—**PETER SELLARS OPERAS,** "Don Giovanni" (July 25 and July 29 at 8), "Le Nozze di Figaro" (July 26, July 28, and Aug. 2, all at 8), and "Così Fan Tutte" (July 30 at 2:30). . . . **"WARD NO. SIX,"** an adaptation of the Chekhov story, performed by Moscow's Pushkin Theatre. In Russian, with simultaneous translation. (July 27-29 and July 31-Aug. 1, all at 8:30, and July 30 at 3.) . . . **"SUSPECT TERRAIN,"** a dance work performed by Laurie Booth, Polly Motley, Steve Paxton, and Dana Reitz. (July 27-29 at 8:30, and July 30 at 6.) (State University of New York at Purchase. Through Aug. 6. For information about tickets and about round-trip bus transportation from Lincoln Center, call 1-914 253-5900.)

Serious Fun!—Final performances—**DIAMANDA GALAS,** in her musical performance work "Masque of the Red Death." (July 25 at 8.) . . . **SCOTT JOHNSON, ANTHONY DAVIS,** and **LUCIA HWONG,** in new compositions with electronic and orchestral elements. (July 26 at 8.) . . . **"OBJECTS OF DESIRE,"** performance works by Stuart Sherman, Paul Zaloom, Danny Mydlack, and Dancenoise. (July 27 at 8.) . . . **"ORAL FIXATIONS,"** more performance works, these by John O'Keefe, Michael Peppe, Tom Cayler, and Reno. (July 28-29 at 8.) . . . **ERIC BOGOSIAN,** in a solo show. (July 31-Aug. 1 at 8.) . . . **"MEGADANCE II,"** dance works by Stephanie Skura, Marguerite Guergue, Doug Elkins, Ann Carlson, Stephen Petronio, Second Hand Dance, Marta Renzi, Christian Swenson, Ohad Naharin, and Blondell Cummings. (Aug. 2-3 at 8.) (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the Pittsburgh Pirates, July 25-26 at 7:35, and July 27 at 1:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Toronto Blue Jays, July 28-29 at 7:30, July 30 at 1:30, and July 31 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Minnesota Twins, Aug. 1 at 1, Aug. 2 at 4:30 (a twi-night doubleheader), and Aug. 3 at 7:30.
(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Sword Dancer is on July 29. Through July 31. . . . At Saratoga Springs: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1:30, from Aug. 2 through Aug. 28. . . . At Monmouth Park, Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30. The Haskell Invitational is on July 29. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. Through Aug. 19.

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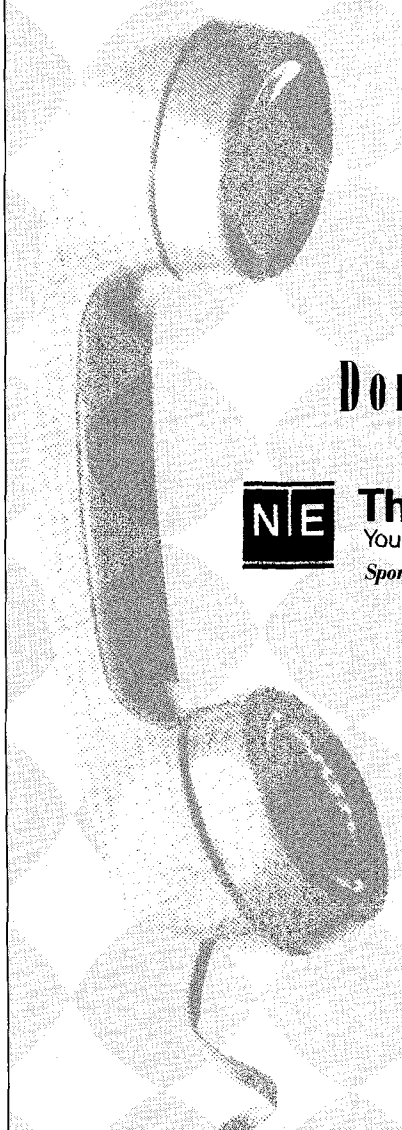

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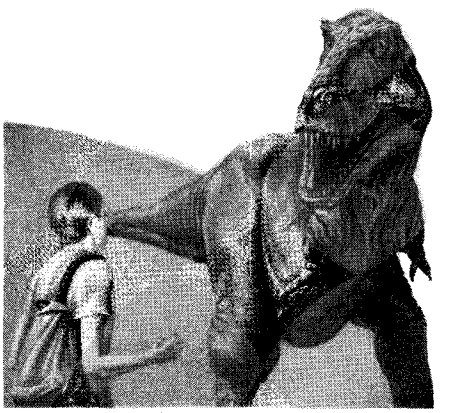
ABOVE AND BEYOND

"DINOSAURS ALIVE!"—A mostly-for-kids show of robotic half-size dinosaurs which has managed to cause a scholarly scuffle—not everyone agrees on what kind of skin markings dinosaurs had, for instance. The subjects here are covered with charcoal-colored blotches, and look as if they were left on the grill too long. Along with all the wandering eyeballs and craning necks, you'll find a translucent lava spill, plenty of ferns and fake rocks, and a basic jungle soundtrack—lots of roaring



and an occasional caw-caw. "Dinosaurs Alive!" covers moments of birth (a parasaurolphus rocks out of an egg) and death (a deinonychus has at a felled prey). There's a particularly inspired bit at the outset when a pair of stegosauruses feast on Battery Park City. The stegosauruses were herbivores, but when you're hungry you're hungry. (2 World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Open daily.)

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

WAVE HILL—There is a park in the Bronx that is so well groomed, so refined, that you could scarcely call it a park. Wave Hill—a city-owned and privately managed landmark, concert hall, gallery, garden, and park—is a recreational spot for the poetically minded. Certainly chicken salad and Frisbees have rarely, if ever, been seen within its wrought-iron fences. Its clipped lawns, perennial gardens, and stone arbors bring to mind a Henry James novel; its view of the Hudson, with the Palisades looking like a background scrim, evokes works by painters of the Hudson River school. Visitors, bowled over by the aesthetics, murmur as they stroll, which makes Wave Hill seem as much museum as park. And the groundskeepers enforce this analogy. The smooth wood and plaster sculptures on display in the gallery spill out onto the lawns, where they consort with the elms. All the trees are meticulously labelled, as are the herbs (Egyptian onion, bronze fennel, horehound), the lilies, and even the park benches (each one is dedicated to someone's memory). Wave Hill (549-3200), in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, is accessible by the A train and bus Bx20, or by the No. 1 train and bus Bx10 or Bx7. Or call Mosholu Van Service (543-6900). They'll pick you up almost anywhere in Manhattan and drive you home, for $4 each way. Admission is $2 on weekends, free on weekdays.

JONES BEACH THEATRE—The SHEENA EASTON question: if funk giant Prince, after unfairly appraising the five-foot-tall Scottish pop goddess in the course of a salacious video collaboration, was able to see his error, look Sheena in the eye, and sing, "I stand corrected," must those of us who long ago dismissed Ms. Easton as a glossy whelp of nothingness likewise reconsider her fitness to entertain? The recent recorded evidence is inconclusive, but here's another chance to probe the issue, in a concert sponsored by the Jack La Lanne health-club chain. (July 27 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-516 221-1000.)

LINCOLN CENTER PLAZA—Jazz and swing concerts for dancers. July 26: Bob Rosengarden Orchestra. . . . ¶ July 27: Vince Giordano & the Nighthawks. . . . ¶ July 28: The Dixie Ramblers. . . . ¶ July 29: Panama Francis and the Savoy Sultans. (Evenings at 9:30. Tickets at the door.)

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 17.

EAST SIDE

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Les Liaisons Dangereuses" (†). Closed Mondays.

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 3: "Shag" (directed by Zelda Barron), with Phoebe Cates, Scott Coffey, Annabeth Gish, Bridget Fonda, Page Hannah, and Robert Rusler.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
Through July 27: "Dead Poets Society" (†).
From July 28: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.

MURRAY HILL, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
"Batman" (†).

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
Theatre 2: "UHF" (Jay Levey), with "Weird Al" Yankovic.
Theatre 3: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton, Carey Lowell, Robert Davi, Talisa Soto, and Anthony Zerbe.

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Ghostbusters II" (†).

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

SUTTON, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Heathers" (†).

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through July 27: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy, Jonathan Silverman, Catherine Mary Stewart, and Terry Kiser. From July 28: "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (Rob Hedden).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Do the Right Thing" (†).

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.
Theatre 2: "Ghostbusters II" (†).

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 27: "Dead Poets Society" (†). From July 28: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.
Theatre 3: "Dead Poets Society" (†).

GEMINI I AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Shag" (Zelda Barron), with Phoebe Cates, Scott Coffey, Annabeth Gish, Bridget Fonda, Page Hannah, and Robert Rusler.
Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "UHF" (Jay Levey), with "Weird Al" Yankovic.
Theatre 2: "Licence to Kill."

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Valentino Returns" (Peter Hoffman), with Frederic Forrest, Veronica Cartwright, Barry Tubb, and Jenny Wright.

LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Shag" (Zelda Barron), with Phoebe Cates, Scott Coffey, Annabeth Gish, Bridget Fonda, Page Hannah, and Robert Rusler.

LOEWS ORPHEUM I AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton, Carey Lowell, Robert Davi, Talisa Soto, and Anthony Zerbe.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through July 27: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†). From July 28: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.
Theatre 2: "Batman" (†).

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM I, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
Through July 25: "Jimi Plays Monterey" (†).
From July 26: "The Magic Toyshop" (directed by David Wheatley), with Tom Bell, Caroline Milmoe, Kilian McKenna, Patricia Kerrigan, and Lorcan Granitch.

BLEECKER STREET CINEMA I AND 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Little Vera" (Vasily Pichul; in Russian), with Natalya Negoda; and "Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh" (†).
Theatre 2: "Field of Dreams" (†).

WAVERLY I AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.
Theatre 2: Through July 27: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy, Jonathan Silverman, Catherine Mary Stewart, and Terry Kiser. From July 28: "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (Rob Hedden).

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).
Theatre 2: "Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.
Theatre 3: "The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (Vincent Ward), with Bruce Lyons.
Theatre 4: "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (†).

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
Theatre 3: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 27: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita. From July 28: "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (Rob Hedden).
Theatre 3: "Field of Dreams" (†).

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
Theatre 4: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio, Noriyuki (Pat) Morita, Robyn Lively, and Martin L. Kove.

FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (Vincent Ward), with Bruce Lyons.

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills" (†).

CARNEGIE SCREENING ROOM, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Little Vera" (Vasily Pichul; in Russian), with Natalya Negoda.

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Eat a Bowl of Tea" (Wayne Wang).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Field of Dreams" (†).

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

LINCOLN PLAZA 1, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle" (Eric Rohmer; in French), with Jöelle Miquel and Jessica Forde.
Theatre 2: "Chocolat" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corbiau; in French).

CINEMA STUDIO I AND 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Taxing Woman's Return" (Juzo Itami; in Japanese), with Nobuko Miyamoto.

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (Rob Reiner), with Billy Crystal, Meg Ryan, Carrie Fisher, and Bruno Kirby.

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "UHF" (Jay Levey), with "Weird Al" Yankovic.
Theatre 3: "Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.
Theatre 4: "Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton, Carey Lowell, Robert Davi, Talisa Soto, and Anthony Zerbe.
Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
Theatre 6: Through July 27: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†). From July 28: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.

METRO CINEMA I AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Shag" (directed by Zelda Barron), with Phoebe Cates, Scott Coffey, Annabeth Gish, Bridget Fonda, Page Hannah, and Robert Rusler.
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Karate Kid Part III" (John G. Avildsen), with Ralph Macchio and Noriyuki (Pat) Morita.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Shag" (directed by Zelda Barron), with Phoebe Cates, Scott Coffey, Annabeth Gish, Bridget Fonda, Page Hannah, and Robert Rusler.
Theatre 3: "Weekend at Bernie's" (Ted Kotcheff), with Andrew McCarthy, Jonathan Silverman, Catherine Mary Stewart, and Terry Kiser.
Theatre 4: Through July 27: "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" (Arthur Hiller), with Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor. From July 28: "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (Rob Hebden).
Theatre 5: "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.
Theatre 6: "UHF" (Jay Levey), with "Weird Al" Yankovic.

EMBASSY I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through July 27: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).
From July 28: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 27: "Indiana Jones

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MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

and the Last Crusade" (†). From July 28: "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).
Theatre 4: "Peter Pan" (1953), a full-length Walt Disney cartoon.

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Licence to Kill" (John Glen), with Timothy Dalton, Carey Lowell, Robert Davi, Talisa Soto, and Anthony Zerbe.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Ghostbusters II" (†).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).

WARNER, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Lawrence of Arabia" (†).

WEST SIDE CINEMA 1 AND 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover.

REVIVAL HOUSES

BIOGRAPH CINEMA, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
July 24: "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House" (1948, directed by H. C. Potter), with Myrna Loy, Cary Grant, and Melvyn Douglas; and "Arsenic and Old Lace" (1944, Frank Capra), with Grant, Priscilla Lane, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre, Josephine Hull, and Jean Adair.
July 25-26: "Design for Living" (1933, Ernst Lubitsch), with Fredric March, Miriam Hopkins, and Gary Cooper; and "Desire" (1936, Frank Borzage), with Marlene Dietrich and Cooper.
July 27: "The Plainsman" (1936, Cecil B. De Mille), with Jean Arthur, Gary Cooper, and Anthony Quinn; and "Souls at Sea" (1937, Henry Hathaway), with Cooper, Frances Dee, and George Raft.
July 28-29: "Ball of Fire" (1942, Howard Hawks), with Barbara Stanwyck, Gary Cooper, Dana Andrews, and Dan Duryea; and "His Girl Friday" (1940, Hawks), with Rosalind Russell, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy.
July 30-31: "Operation Petticoat" (1959, Blake Edwards), with Cary Grant, Tony Curtis, and Dina Merrill; and "I Was a Male War Bride" (†).
Aug. 1-2: "Peter Ibbetson" (†) and "City Streets" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through July 25: Two programs of cartoons shown each week.
July 26-27: "Lolita" (1962, Stanley Kubrick), with Sue Lyon, James Mason, Peter Sellers, and Shelley Winters; and "Pretty Baby" (1978, Louis Malle), with Keith Carradine, Susan Sarandon, Brooke Shields, and Antonio Fargas.
July 28-29: "Barfly" (1987, Barbet Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke, Faye Dunaway, and Alice Krige; and "Tales of Ordinary Madness" (†).
July 30: "Crusoe" (†) and "Billy Budd" (†).
July 31-Aug. 1: Two programs of cartoons shown each week.
From Aug. 2: "Zabriskie Point" (1970, Michelangelo Antonioni), with Mark Frechette, Daria Halprin, and Rod Taylor; and "Far North" (†).

FILM FORUM 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590)
July 24: "Cat People" (1942, Jacques Tourneur), with Simone Simon, Kent Smith, and Tom Conway; "The Body Snatcher" (1945, Robert Wise), with Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi; and "I Walked with a Zombie" (1943, Tourneur), with Frances Dee and James Ellison.
July 25-26: "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" (1954, Jack Arnold), with Richard Carlson and Julia Adams; and "This Island Earth" (1955, Joseph M. Newman), with Faith Domergue and Rex Reason.
July 27-28: "Revenge of the Dead" (1960, Edward D. Wood); and "The Brain from Planet Arous" (1958, Nathan Hertz), with John Agar.
July 29-30: "The Thing" (1951, Christian Nyby), with Kenneth Tobey, Robert Cornthwaite, and James Arness; and "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951, Robert Wise), with Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal, and Hugh Marlowe.
July 31: "The Woman in the Moon" (1929, Fritz Lang; silent), with Fritz Rasp; and "Aelita: The Revolt of the Robots" (1924, Jakov Protazanov; silent).
Aug. 1-2: "The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T." (1953, Roy Rowland), with Peter Lind Hayes, Mary Healy, Hans Conried, and Tommy Rettig; and "The 7th Voyage of Sinbad" (1958, Nathan Juran), with Kerwin Mathews, Kathryn Grant, and Richard Eyer.

The Bonds: Roger, George, Sean, and Timothy

SEAPORT CINEMA, 210 Front St. (608-7839)
July 24: "The Last Temptation of Christ" (1988, Martin Scorsese), with Willem Dafoe; and "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1966, Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with a cast of nonprofessionals.
July 25-27: "Barfly" (1987, Barbet Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke, Faye Dunaway, and Alice Krige; and "Love Is a Dog from Hell" (1987, Dominique Derudderer; in Flemish).
July 28-31: "Babette's Feast" (1988, Gabriel Axel; in Danish and French), with Stéphane Audran; and "Wedding in Blood" (1974, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Audran and Michel Piccoli.
From Aug. 1: Theatre closed.

THALIA SOHO, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
July 24: "Beggars of Life" (1926, William Wellman; silent), with Louise Brooks, Richard Arlen, and Wallace Beery; and "Smouldering Fires" (1925, Clarence Brown; silent), with Pauline Frederick.
July 25: "A Place in the Sun" (1951, George Stevens), with Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor, and Shelley Winters; and "Shane" (1953, Stevens), with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Brandon deWilde, Van Heflin, and Jack Palance.
July 26: "The Fountainhead" (1949, King Vidor), with Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, and Raymond Massey; and "Jane Eyre" (1944, Robert Stevenson), with Joan Fontaine, Orson Welles, Margaret O'Brien, Henry Daniell, and John Sutton.
July 27: "Bird" (1988, Clint Eastwood), with Forest Whitaker; and "Round Midnight" (1986, Bertrand Tavernier), with Dexter Gordon.
July 28-29: "Rebel Without a Cause" (1955, Nicholas Ray), with James Dean, Natalie Wood, Sal Mineo, Corey Allen, and Nick Adams; and "East of Eden" (1955, Elia Kazan), with Julie Harris, Dean, Raymond Massey, and Richard Davalos.
July 30: "Two Women" (†) and "The Gold of Naples" (†).
July 31: "Secrets of the Night" (1925, Herbert Blanché; silent), with ZaSu Pitts, Madge Bellamy, and James Kirkwood; and "Old Heidelberg" (1915, John Emerson; silent), with Dorothy Gish, Wallace Ford, and Erich von Stroheim.
Aug. 1: "Empire of the Sun" (1987, Steven Spielberg), with John Malkovich, Miranda Richardson, and Christian Bale; and "The Last Emperor" (1987, Bernardo Bertolucci), with John Lone.
Aug. 2: "Bank Holiday" (1938, Carol Reed), with Margaret Lockwood and Hugh Williams; and "The Stars Look Down" (1939, Reed), with Lockwood and Michael Redgrave.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 24: "The Raven" ("Le Corbeau"; 1943, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Pierre Fresnay and Ginette Leclerc; and "The Wages of Fear" (1953, Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.
July 25: "The Man Who Knew Too Much" (1934, Alfred Hitchcock), with Leslie Banks, Edna Best, Pierre Fresnay, and Peter Lorre; and "Secret Agent" (1936, Hitchcock), with John Gielgud, Lorre, Madeleine Carroll, and Robert Young.
July 26: "Ecstasy" (1933, Gustav Machaty; in Czech), with Hedy Lamarr; and "Algiers" (1938, John Cromwell), with Lamarr and Charles Boyer.
July 27: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (1946 †); and "The Bad and the Beautiful" (1953, Vincente Minnelli), with Lana Turner, Kirk Douglas, Dick Powell, and Gloria Grahame.
July 28-29: "Masculine Feminine" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud and Chantal Goya; and "A Married Woman" (1965, Godard; in French), with Macha Meril.
July 30: "Rain" (1932, Lewis Milestone), with Joan Crawford, Walter Huston, William Gargan, and Beulah Bondi; and "Of Human Bondage" (1934, John Cromwell), with Bette Davis, Leslie Howard, Frances Dee, and Kay Johnson.
July 31: "Nibelungen Saga" (†).
Aug. 1: "Blackmail" (†); and "Sabotage" ("The Woman Alone"; 1936, Alfred Hitchcock), with Sylvia Sidney, Oscar Homolka, and Desmond Tester.
Aug. 2: "Goldfinger" (1964, Guy Hamilton) and "From Russia with Love" (1964, Terence Young), both with Sean Connery as James Bond.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—July 24 at 2:30: "Double Suicide" (1969, directed by Masahiro Shinoda; in Japanese). . . . ¶ July 24 at 6: "The End of the Rainbow" (1916, Lynn Reynolds; silent); and "Shep's Race with Death" (1914, silent) and "A Dog's Love" (1914, silent). . . . ¶ July 25 at 2:30: "Green Light to Joy" (1967, Seiji Maruyama; in Japanese). . . . ¶ July 25 at 6: "Double Suicide." . . . ¶ July 27 at 2:30: "I Shot Jesse James" (1949, Samuel Fuller), with Preston Foster and Barbara Brittan. . . . ¶ July 27 at 6: "The Baron of Arizona" (1950, Fuller), with Vincent Price. . . . ¶ July 28 at 2:30: Films made in 1906 by Georges Méliès, Emile Cohl, D. W. Griffith, Romaine Fielding, and Kenean Buel. . . . ¶ July 28 at 6: "Before the Dawn" (1982, Jayatilaka Armanath; in Sri Lankan). . . . ¶ July 29 at 2: "The Steel Helmet" (1961, Fuller), with Robert Hutton and Steve Brodie. . . . ¶ July 29 at 6: "Green Light to Joy." . . . ¶ July 30 at 2: "French Can Can" (1955, Jean Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin and Françoise Arnoul. . . . ¶ July 30 at 5: "On the Line" (1985, Steve Kovaks). . . . ¶ July 31 at 2:30: "Before the Dawn." . . . ¶ July 31 at 6: Films

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made in 1906. . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 2:30: "On the Line." . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 6: "Faust" (1926, F. W. Murnau; silent, with German intertitles), with Emil Jannings.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 36th St. at 35th Ave., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films directed by Cecil B. De Mille. July 26 at 2:30: "Cleopatra" (1934), with Claudette Colbert. . . . ¶ July 27 at 2:30: "The Crusades" (1935), with Loretta Young and Henry Wilcoxon. . . . ¶ July 28 at 2:30: "The Buccaneer" (1938), with Fredric March. . . . ¶ July 29 at 2: "Union Pacific" (1939), with Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, and Robert Preston. . . . ¶ July 29 at 5: "North West Mounted Police" (1940), with Gary Cooper. . . . ¶ July 30 at 2: "Reap the Wild Wind" (1942), with John Wayne, Ray Milland, and Paulette Godard. . . . ¶ July 30 at 5: "The Story of Dr. Wassell" (1944), with Cooper. . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 2:30: "Union Pacific."

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty years. July 25-29: Robert Alan Arthur's "A Man Is Ten Feet Tall" (1956, NBC), with Sidney Poitier; and Henry F. Greenberg's "People Need People" (1961, ABC), with Lee Marvin. . . . From Aug. 1: Paddy Chayefsky's "Marty" (1953, NBC), with Rod Steiger and Nancy Marchand. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ Comedies seen on cable. July 25-29: "Bette Midler—Art or Bust" (1984). . . . From Aug. 1: "Not Necessarily the News" (1982) and "Not Necessarily Television" (1986). Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ Commemoration of Richard Rodgers. July 25-29: "The Ed Sullivan Show" (1962, CBS), a tribute to Rodgers, with Peggy Lee, Steve Lawrence, Diahann Carroll, and others. . . . From Aug. 1: "Cinderella" (1957, Ralph Nelson; CBS), with Julie Andrews, Howard Lindsay, Dorothy Stickney, Ilka Chase, Edie Adams, Alice Ghostley, and Kaye Ballard. Showings Tuesdays at 2:30 and 6:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 2:30. . . . ¶ Shows produced and directed by Gary Smith and Dwight Hemion. July 25-29: "The Kraft Music Hall: Woody Allen Looks at 1967" (1967, NBC), with Liza Minnelli, John Byner, Aretha Franklin, and William F. Buckley, Jr.; and "Burt Bacharach '74" (1974, NBC), with Jack Jones, Roger Moore, Sandy Duncan, and the Harlem Globetrotters. . . . From Aug. 1: "Peter Pan" (1976, NBC), with Mia Farrow, Danny Kaye, Virginia McKenna, and Paula Kelly. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 1.

92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. (996-1100)—July 27 at 8: Dr. Sybil Del Gaudio, attorney Renee Wayne Golden, and television critic Marvin Kitman will talk about television docudramas, with several examples of this film style being shown.

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—July 27 at 8: "Nanook of the North" (1922, Robert Flaherty), a documentary. Organ accompaniment written and played by Lee Erwin.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Penelope Gilliatt.)

Batman—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who turns into the leering madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt; design by Anton Furst; costumes by Bob Ringwood; a plangent score by Danny Elfman; and songs by Prince. The cast includes Jack Palance, Kim Basinger, Jerry Hall, and Robert Wuhl.—P.K. (Reviewed in our issue of 7/10/89.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Billy Budd (1962)—Melville's short novel is stripped for action in this tense, straightforward shipboard narrative, directed by Peter Ustinov. Ustinov's efficiency and Robert Krasker's stylized black-and-white cinematography help to release the ambiguities without clogging the film with metaphysical speculation or too many homoerotic overtones. As Billy, the beautiful sailor, an American Prince Myshkin, Terence Stamp wears white pants and suggests angelic splendor without falling into the narcissistic poses that juveniles often mistake for grace. Robert Ryan is the depraved master-at-arms, Claggart, whose self-hatred makes it necessary for him to destroy Billy, the image of goodness; Ryan gives the role the requisite satanic ugliness. Unfortunately, Ustinov miscasts himself as Captain Vere; as he plays the part, the Captain is a humane man, a good liberal tragically torn by the demands of authority. But what gives Melville's story its fascination and its greatness is the suggestion that Claggart is merely the underling doing the evil Captain's bidding. The film doesn't approach Melville's passion, but it's a good movie anyway. The adaptation by Ustinov, Robert Rossen, and DeWitt Bodeen comes via a play version by Louis O. Coxe and Robert H. Chapman.—P.K. (Cinema Village; July 30.)

Blackmail (1929)—A London-set Hitchcock silent thriller that was in part reshot and in part dubbed to make it a sound film—and an unusually imaginative and innovative one. With its trick shots in the British Museum and a chase on the museum roof, the film seems almost German in its pictorial style, and the heroine is indeed played by the German actress Anny Ondra, who married Max Schmeling. (Her voice is dubbed.) Cyril Ritchard, who didn't look very different half a century later, plays the artist who tries to rape the heroine. Hitchcock turns up being pestered by a little boy while he tries to read a book.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 1.)

Chocolat—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. In denying him any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. In French.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

"The Thing" (playing at the Film Forum 2 on July 29-30) boasts one of the greatest sequences in science-fiction movies: An Air Force crew and a team of scientists investigate the crash landing of a giant radioactive object in the Arctic wastes. From the air, they spot a huge patch of fresh ice that resembles a cross-section of the eye and optic nerve. When they go by dogsled to the site, they can see through the ice enough to spread out and mark the UFO's shape. With outstretched arms—like grade-school boys doing calisthenics—they realize that they've formed "a perfect circle." They've found a flying saucer.

This taut 1951 Howard Hawks production (directed by Christian Nyby, written by Charles Lederer) is about what happens when the humans bring the saucer's sole survivor (James Arness) back to base, where he's revealed to be a bloodthirsty, eight-foot-tall "intellectual carrot." Although the movie never regains the setup's peak of inspiration, it's a consistently scary, amusingly ironic piece of sci-fi. With a stalwart military officer (Kenneth Tobey) protecting mankind's interests against a master scientist (Robert Cornthwaite) who wants to study the creature at any cost, "The Thing" helped establish the clichés of fifties sci-fi movies. But this prototype is tenser and smarter than its copycats. At the end, when a reporter urges humanity to "keep watching the skies," it's both a chilling injunction and a parody of journalese.

City Streets (1931)—A love story in a gangster setting which got carried away into so much fancy expressionism and symbolism that it seems stylized out of all relationship to the actual world. The director, Rouben Mamoulian, appears to be the culprit; he's so busy with his camera arabesques he forgets to tell the story, and then, at the end, tries to save the movie with a big chase. Gary Cooper is the honest, gaunt young hero from the world of the circus who gets into the beer racket and starts wearing coats with fur collars; Sylvia Sidney is the sacrificing heroine who goes to jail for her father (Guy Kibbee). The script is based on a story by Dashiell Hammett.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 1-2.)

Crusoe—In this variation on the famous story, Aidan Quinn is a Tidewater Virginia slave trader whose eagerness for profits leads him, in 1808, to charter a ship in the dangerous autumn months. The story has been re-imagined so that when the ship is wrecked and the immature, unfeeling moneygrubber is swept onto an island, what follows is not a wilderness test of survival—it's an enforced spiritual retreat. Directed by Caleb Deschanel, from a script by Walon Green, this version is spare and evocative; it tends toward wordlessness and suggests a haiku movie. Essentially, it's all images of entrapment and freedom—it's about Crusoe's learning to revere freedom after he has twice been saved from death by a native warrior (Adé Sapara). Deschanel's lack of narrative skill is frank and deliberate; his emotionality and his feeling for atmosphere can carry a viewer along. He has a style; it comes out of the meekness in the way he works. And slim, curly-topped Aidan Quinn, with his dazed voice and his fixated blue eyes, is Crusoe as a hippie Christ figure—a young man finding his way to be gentle. Open, receptive, a New Age Montgomery Clift, he's the right actor for Deschanel's conception. The movie suggests a revised "Tempest," in which Prospero and Caliban find out they're brothers. Shot mostly on the Seychelles Islands.—P.K. (4/17/89) (Cinema Village; July 30.)

Dead Poets Society—Robin Williams gives an astonishingly empathic performance as an eager, dedicated prep-school teacher in the late fifties. This teacher talks to his boys about the passions expressed in poetry and helps them release their creative impulses. But one of the boys, soaring on his new confidence, lacks the shrewdness and courage

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

to deal with his rigid, uncomprehending father, and makes a disastrous choice. Directed by Peter Weir, from a script by Thomas Schulman, the picture draws out the obvious and turns itself into a classic. Weir, it appears, is more interested in the elegiac than in the dramatic. Like his "Gallipoli," this film has a gold ribbon attached to it. With Robert Sean Leonard, Ethan Hawke, Josh Charles, Gale Hansen, and Kurtwood Smith and Norman Lloyd.—P.K. (6/26/89) (Cinema 3rd Avenue, Guild, and Loews Paramount. . . . ¶ Gramercy and Cinema II; *through July 28.*)

Do The Right Thing—The third feature by Spike Lee takes place in the black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, on a punishingly hot day; the focus of the action is a pizzeria, Sal's Famous, which is apparently the last white-owned business on the block; and the climax is a riot sparked by a monstrous act of police brutality. At its most basic, Lee's intention is to demonstrate how in a racially polarized society the slow accumulation of small irritations can swell to something huge and ugly and lethal. It's a solid idea for a movie, and initially the picture provides its share of incidental pleasures. It has loads of atmosphere, and superb cinematography by Ernest Dickerson, who gives the images a daring, Hawaiian-shirt glare. And, although most of the many characters Lee shows us are types, at least there are a lot of different ones, and their encounters are often funny. But Lee goes wrong by pushing his material to a "powerful" climax, a Scorsese-like explosion of violence: he sacrifices political clarity for the sake of the big statement. He's nimble-witted and passionate, but his movie seems to shout at us rather than speak to us. In addition to writing, producing, and directing, Lee also plays the pivotal role of Mookie, the pizza deliveryman. Others in the cast are Danny Aiello (as Sal), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, Rosie Perez, Joie Lee, John Turturro, and Richard Edson; as a trio of middle-aged street-corner philosophers, Paul Benjamin, Frankie Faison, and Robin Harris are responsible for the movie's best, loosest scenes.—T.R. (7/24/89) (Manhattan Twin, 59th Street East Cinema, Art Greenwich Twin, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Far North—Sam Shepard's first movie as a director is a mess—and a pale-spirited, unambitious one besides. Shepard's script is a mild rural comedy about a Minnesota family, with all the usual conflicts on display: the father (Charles Durning) is a macho blowhard; the mother (Ann Wedgeworth) is a gentle loony; the daughters (Jessica Lange and Tess Harper) stomp their feet, look exasperated, and bicker with their faces scrunched up. There's also an irritable centenarian, a drunken uncle, and a "wild" teenage girl on the periphery—all of them as boringly vivid as sitcom characters. The central issue (symbolic, of course) is whether Lange will obey her father's order to shoot an ornery cart horse named Mel. This slender, dopey premise must have been intended to provide a framework for farce and to allow for some action outdoors. So the characters have cute arguments in the woods, rather than nasty ones in motel rooms: it's like a "Hee Haw" version of a Shepard play—broad, strenuous, and not very funny. Lange tries hard, and has a few lovely moments; Mel maintains his dignity throughout. Also with Donald Moffat, Patricia Arquette, and Nina Draxten.—T.R. (Cinema Village; starting Aug. 2.)

Field of Dreams—Doggerel emotion. Kevin Costner, a New Age farmer in Iowa, longs to be reconciled with his dead father, a minor-league baseball player whose outlook he had rejected in the sixties. He hears a whispered command to build a baseball field, and when he does the spirits of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta) and the other White Sox who were barred from baseball for life after the 1919 World Series scandal arrive and play regularly. This is only the beginning of the hero's mystical encounters. That the film is sincere doesn't mean it's not manipulative; when the weepers in the audience start up, you may feel like a pariah if you're not moved. Adapted by the writer-director Phil Alden Robinson from W. P. Kinsella's 1982 novel "Shoeless Joe." With Amy Madigan.—P.K. (5/1/89) (Eastside Cinema, Bleecker Street Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Cinema 3.)

Ghostbusters II—Surprisingly, it's more enjoyable than the first "Ghostbusters." It's a big comedy, but it's light on its feet, and the throwaway jokes are weightless—they *ping!* and dissolve in the air. You can't remember what you're laughing at, but you feel great. The script, by Harold Ramis and Dan Aykroyd, is a floating crap game, like the scripts for the Hope and Crosby "Road" pictures. Bill Murray holds it together, and assorted comedians—Sigourney Weaver, Rick Moranis, Annie Potts, Ernie Hudson, Peter MacNicol, Cheech Marin, Harris Yulin, Ramis & Aykroyd—come in and out of the scenes, dropping one-liners. The comic premise is that the collective angry energy of Manhattanites is feeding an underground river of boiling slime, which is swelling; our bad vibes are literally destroying the city. Directed by Ivan Reitman; cinematography by Michael Chapman.—P.K. (7/10/89) (34th St. East, Coronet, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and National Twin.)

The Gold of Naples (1956)—Vittoria De Sica directed this collection of Neapolitan episodes, featuring Totò as a little clown imposed on by a bullying racketeer, Silvana Mangano as a prostitute, Sophia Loren in her celebrated comic turn as a pizza seller, and De Sica himself as a gambler—which the whole world knows he was. He was also a director who could combine melancholy and wit. It's an uneven film, but Loren walking and De Sica gambling are works of art. In Italian.—P.K. *(Thalia SoHo; July 30.)*

Sophia Loren in "Two Women"

Heathers—Westerburg High's three rich beauties who make life hell for those less gilded are all named Heather. Their reluctant associate, Veronica (Winona Ryder), confides in her diary that she dreams of "a world without Heather," and a psychotically fearless juvenile delinquent, J.D. (Christian Slater), materializes, and goads her to become his accomplice in making her dream come true. The script, by Daniel Waters, has a lot of prankish, spiky dialogue and some good rowdy slapstick nastiness, such as Veronica and J.D.'s killing two football heroes and arranging their deaths to suggest that they were lovers in a suicide pact; the script promises that the picture will lift off into the junior division of Blue Velvetland. But layers of didacticism weigh it down, and the young, inexperienced director, Michael Lehmann (who uses hyper-bright colors for a facetious artificial effect), doesn't find the right moods for the gags. Where's the sting?—P.K. (4/17/89) (Plaza.)

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids—A contraption invented by a suburban nerd scientist (Rick Moranis) cuts both his kids and the neighbors down to size: a quarter of an inch. Unaware of what has happened, and unable to hear their pipsqueak cries, Dad sweeps them into a dustpan, dumps them in a garbage bag, and hauls the bag out to the curb. The kids have to make their way back to the house across the (not very recently mowed) lawn—a long trek for tiny, tiny legs. There are adventures, of course, engineered by the sort of special-effects "magic" that probably even the youngest audiences have learned by now to dread. The real surprise of this movie—which was directed by Joe Johnston, an effects specialist from Industrial Light & Magic, and which carries an immense list of technical credits (including a "Scorpion Crew," a "Bee Sequence Crew," and a "Stop Motion Ant Crew")—is that it's friendly, good-humored, and unpretentious. Johnston manages to scale down not only the kids but also the movie's sense of its own importance. He seems aware that the only point of "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" is to make children giggle (and adults smile); for all the money and elaborate technology needed to produce this silliness, the picture never looks fussy. It's short and brisk and it doesn't shrink your intelligence any more than it absolutely has to. Also with Matt Frewer, Marcia Strassman, and Kristine Sutherland; Jared Rushton, Amy O'Neill, Thomas Brown, and Robert Oliveri are the kids. The imaginative cinematography is by Hiro Narita—T.R. (Gotham Cinema, and Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1; through July 27. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting July 28.)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Meyjes.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, and Embassy.)

I Was a Male War Bride (1949)—Somebody must have thought it would be funny to put Cary Grant in skirts and a horsehair wig. The whole thing is one of those awful transvestite jokes that never have the grace to go off color; it all stays at the chortling wholesome-family-picture level. Ann Sheridan plays the Wac lieutenant whom Grant (a French Army captain) marries; the gimmick is that she's stationed in occupied Germany (where the film was made) and the only Army regulation under which he can accompany her back to the United States is the one concerning the immigration of war brides. The conception requires Sheridan to be bossy and butch (it's one of her least pleasant performances), and Grant is never so beefy and clumsy as when he's in drag; he doesn't play a woman, he threatens to—flirting with the idea and giggling over it. Howard Hawks directed, but his pacing is off and everything seems forced. The screenplay is by Charles Lederer, Leonard Spigelgass, and Hagar Wilde, from a book by Henri Rochard (Grant plays Rochard).—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; July 30-31.)

Jimi Plays Monterey—In a sense, this movie by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus is just leftover footage from Pennebaker's cinema-verité documentary "Monterey Pop." For many of us, though, "Jimi Plays Monterey" and its shorter companion piece "Shake" (credited to Pennebaker, Hegedus, and David Dawkins) add up to the *real* "Monterey Pop," the record of the performances that made the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival memorable: Jimi Hendrix's and Otis Redding's. The Hendrix film, fifty minutes long, shows the great guitarist at his peak, ripping through his early hits ("Hey Joe," "Foxy Lady," "The Wind Cries Mary") and a handful of rock and blues classics ("Killing Floor," "Wild Thing," "Like a Rolling Stone") with a virtuosity that borders on insolence. Freak-thin, electric-haired, and dressed in the wild colors of a psychedelic dandy, Hendrix is the epitome of hippie-era cool. When he sings, the lyrics just seem to drift out of his mouth, as if he hadn't known anything was in there, and his playing often looks impossibly casual: intricate, lovely clusters of notes stream from

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his guitar, and his ease is baffling. (It's like watching a deft, light-fingered magician doing tricks with cards and coins.) When he wants power and noise, the sounds he produces are unearthly. And then, just to prove how absurdly simple it all is, he reels off a solo with the guitar behind his back, or plays the instrument with his teeth. Finally, he kneels over his guitar and sets it on fire, as if he were sacrificing it to some unseen force—whatever diabolic power he made a deal with for his genius. Otis Redding's set is criminally short—only five songs—but in its way it's as overwhelming as Hendrix's. Redding doesn't mind showing us how hard he's working: he shouts and sweats and shakes and repeats lines until they turn into incantations. His performance is astonishingly emotional, especially in the soul ballads "I've Been Loving You Too Long" and "Try a Little Tenderness." Hendrix and Redding, both of whom died much too young, are vibrantly alive in these performances. And they have to be, just to survive the filmmaking, which is mostly indifferent and occasionally obtrusive. Groovin'-crowd montages tell us that what we're watching is an exercise in nostalgia; the music tells us something very different.—T.R. (Film Forum 1; through July 25.)

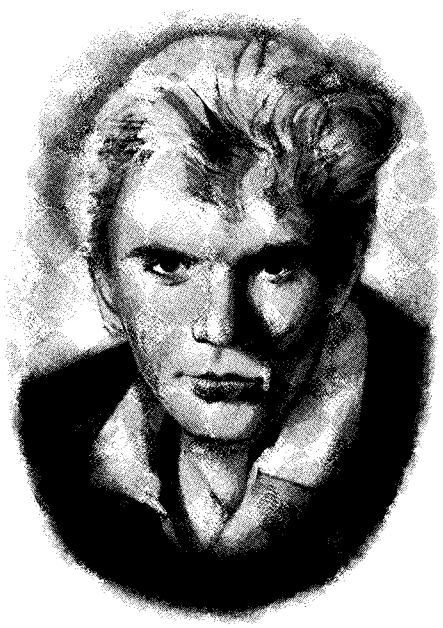
Lawrence of Arabia (1962)—If you went to see it under the delusion that it was going to be about T. E. Lawrence, you probably stayed to enjoy the vastness of the desert and the pleasures of the senses that a huge movie epic can provide. Directed by David Lean, from a script by Robert Bolt, loosely based on Lawrence's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," this picture fails to give an acceptable interpretation of Lawrence, or to keep its action intelligible, but it is one of the most literate and tasteful and exciting of expensive spectacles. The central figure is played quite stunningly by Peter O'Toole, though he seems to be doing "Lord Jim"—which he was cast in a couple of years later (and then it looked as if he were doing Lawrence all over again). Bolt and Lean turn the hero into such a flamboyant poetic enigma that he is displaced in the film by a simpler hero—Omar Sharif's Ali, a handsome sheikh with liquid brown eyes and conventionally sympathetic lines to speak. As it became apparent that most people in the audience hadn't the remotest idea of what the Arabs and the Turks were doing in the First World War, or which was which, or why the English cared, the question raised by the movie was, Can complicated historical events and a complex hero really get across in a spectacle? With Alec Guinness, José Ferrer, Anthony Quinn, Arthur Kennedy, Jack Hawkins, Claude Rains, Anthony Quayle, and Donald Wolfit. Cinematography by Freddie Young; music by Maurice Jarre. (The film, substantially cut after its first release, has been restored to a more or less definitive version, running 217 minutes.)—P.K. (Warner.)

Les Liaisons Dangereuses (1959)—Valmont and Juliette, the eighteenth-century characters in the Laclos novel, are former lovers who, writing to each other about their strategies, targets, and fresh conquests, turn love into something as studied and calculated as war. They take the love out of love. Modernizing the story, the director, Roger Vadim, ties things up rather neatly by having Valmont (in a tired, too-sweet performance by Gérard Philipe—his last) and Juliette (Jeanne Moreau at her ravaged best) married. In Laclos the pleasure seems to be in carrying out the plan, achieving the victory—a triumph of austere, rational conquest; in Vadim's version a sensuous aura surrounds and permeates the objects. The first scene of Marianne (Annette Stroyberg) in the snow, her mouth open in laughter for a romantic eternity, isn't on a much higher level than the *Playboy* bunnies of the month; Vadim uses sex and jazz all mixed together in a cheap and sensational way that was probably exotic for the French in the fifties. But, using these elements, he attempts to give them a rhythm and feeling that are, at least, unusually high-class commercialism. With Jeanne Valerie, Jean-Louis Trintignant, and Simone Renant. Background music by Thelonious Monk; party music by the Jazz Messengers, with Kenny Clarke. In French.—P.K. (Public Theatre.)

Nibelungen Saga (1923, 1924)—Utterly extraordinary: gigantic heroes, acres of studio-built sets, trailing processions, and a romantic mystique. Fritz Lang's bizarre, monumental German silent film, conceived as a tribute to the nation, is in two full-length parts—"Siegfried" and "Kriemhild's Revenge"—and the second, made a year after the first, is the madder of the two. The first tends to be static and ornamental; the second is packed with contrapuntal visual rhythms. It makes a picture like "Caligari" seem as routine as a TV sitcom. At the ending of "Siegfried," Brünnhilde has had Siegfried killed, and his widow, Kriemhild, swears revenge. In the second picture, Kriemhild marries Attila the Hun and begins the devastation—massacres, flames, chaos. The influence of the painter Arnold Böcklin is evident; this film, in turn, was a strong influence on Eisenstein and Leni Riefenstahl.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 31.)

Peter Ibbetson (1935)—A romantic fantasy in which the hero (Gary Cooper) is visited by his dead beloved (Ann Harding, as Mary, Duchess of Towers), who comes drifting down from Heaven. The five screenwriters failed to lick the datedness of the material (a George Du Maurier story, filmed as a silent, in 1921). This is an essentially sickly gothic, and yet the director, Henry Hathaway, brings off some of the ethereal moments, and the film tends to stay in the memory. With Ida Lupino, John Halliday, Douglass Dumbrille, Donald Meek, and Leonid Kinskey.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 1-2.)

The Postman Always Rings Twice (1946)—Entertaining, though overlong. The director,



Terence Stamp in "Billy Budd"

Tay Garnett, knew almost enough tricks to sustain this glossily bowdlerized version of the James M. Cain novel, and he used Lana Turner maybe better than any other director did. Cain's women are, typically, calculating, hot little animals, and his men doom-ridden victims. Here, Lana Turner's Cora—infantile in a bored, helpless, pre-moral way—is dressed in impeccable white, as if to conceal her sweaty passions and murderous impulses; John Garfield plays the drifter who becomes her lover. Cora's harmless husband (Cecil Kellaway) seems a nuisance to have around, so they decide to finish him off while he's relaxing in the bathtub. As opposing lawyers, Hume Cronyn and Leon Ames have a showoffy courtroom clash. With Audrey Totter. The script is by Harry Ruskin and Niven Busch.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; July 27.)

Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills—The script, by Bruce Wagner, from a satirical sex-farce plot he devised with the director, Paul Bartel, calls for something like the goosey stylized acting that Charles Ludlam perfected at the Ridiculous Theatrical Company, but Bartel has directed with his usual home-movies sluggishness. Two houseboys, a cynic (Ray Sharkey) and a romantic (Robert Beltran), who work in adjacent mansions, bet on which one will be the first to make out with the other's employer—one a divorcée (Mary Woronov), the other a widow (Jacqueline Bisset). The households include various siblings, offspring, and hangers-on (Arnetia Walker, Ed Begley, Jr., Wallace Shawn, Paul Mazursky, Rebecca Schaeffer, Edith Diaz, and others)—all of them libidinous or gaga. Arnetia Walker manages to bring in some zesty horseplay, and Bisset's amused calm is occasionally pleasant, but mostly this is just mistimed, failed camp, and some of the lines that are meant to be screamingly dirty-funny come out screamingly sour.—P.K. (Quad Cinema, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Tales of Ordinary Madness (1981)—Not for people who are disturbed by four-letter words or sexual acts performed with lewd gusto. The script is based on the stories and the spirit of the American poet and novelist Charles Bukowski, a master of rut who writes about the gutbucket pain and elation of being human. The artist-bum hero, who is based in L.A., is played by Ben Gazzara, who gets to cut loose and do things that probably nobody has done onscreen before. The director, Marco Ferreri, gets right down inside Bukowski's self-mocking lust and self-dramatizing temperament. As the convent-bred prostitute, Cass, "the most beautiful woman in town," Ornella Muti is as lithe as a cat, and has the soft radiance of the young Hedy Lamarr in the coital scenes of "Ecstasy." The early sequences don't have much impetus and the dialogue is often flatulent, but there's genuine audacity and risk-taking in this movie. It may not have the energy of great art, but its nakedness has an aesthetic force. With Susan Tyrrell as the gamiest and funniest of the women the hero has bouts with, and Judith Drake. The script, by Ferreri, Sergio Amidei, and Anthony Foutz, is based on Bukowski's stories in the City Lights book "Erections, Ejaculations, Exhibitions and General Tales of Ordinary Madness."—P.K. (Cinema Village; July 28-29.)

Two Women (1961)—A young widow, Sophia Loren, takes her teen-age daughter out of wartime Rome to her native village and then starts back home too soon; both mother and daughter are raped by Moroccan soldiers. Emotional, even shattering, but far from depressing. With Jean-Paul Belmondo and Eleanora Brown; directed by Vittorio De Sica. In Italian.—P.G. (Thalia SoHo; July 30.)

Vincent: The Life and Death of Vincent van Gogh (1987)—Paul Cox's documentary biography of the great painter is earnest, honorable, and uninspired. Cox has the good idea to tell the story in the artist's own words: the voice-over narration consists entirely of excerpts from letters written by van Gogh to his brother Theo. (They are read, with tremendous solemnity and perhaps an excess of actorly skill, by John Hurt.) But Cox's use of the letters is crude: van Gogh's raw, anguished meditations on life and art are presented without irony, as if he really were a profound thinker. The words actually dominate the images; at times, the beautiful paintings function only as illustrations of the deep thoughts. Cox also includes endless footage of Dutch and French countryside, as well as a handful of staged tableaux—peasants eating potatoes, a scene in a cabaret, the painter's funeral. It's all much too pretty—"painterly" in a horribly naïve way. He seems to be trying to compete with van Gogh as a maker of images; he loses. Cox's excesses mirror van Gogh's, but his art doesn't: in this film, the light always seems to be coming from the wrong direction.—T.R. (Bleecker Street Cinema.)

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown—The most original pop writer-director of the eighties, Pedro Almodóvar is Godard with a human face—a happy face. The artificial is what sends him sky high, and the Madrid of this film is (as the closing song has it) "Puro Teatro." This is a movie where after a while you can't tell sexy from funny. Pepa (Carmen Maura), an actress who works in TV and commercials, turns on her answering machine and learns that she has been jilted. Infuriated, she dashes around, on spike heels, in a short, tight skirt, trying to confront her long-time live-in lover, the elegant, vain Iván (Fernando Guillén). The women of the title include Iván's early lover (Julieta Serrano), his new lover (Kiti Manver), and two (Rossy De Palma and María Barranco) who are involved with his son (Antonio Banderas). Sleek-legged and chic, they run the theatrical gamut. Cinematography by José Luis Alcaine. In Spanish.—P.K. (11/14/88) (Cinema Studio.)

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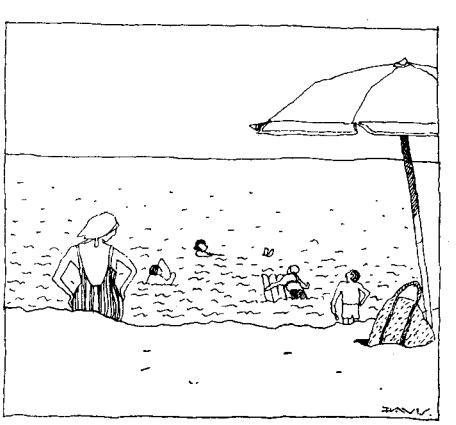
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE bicentennial of the French Revolution recalled to our mind Edmund Burke's commentary on that upheaval in "Reflections on the Revolution in France," and we got it down from the shelf. Burke's main point was that it's dangerous to try to shape society to ideas—that political theories, which are the product of individual minds, are far more liable to error than are constitutional systems, in which many minds contribute to a process of change over time, drawing not on abstractions but on present circumstances and their relation to precedents. "The individual is foolish, but the species is wise," he wrote. Burke preferred the American revolutionaries to the French, because they acted on specific wrongs, such as taxation without representation, rather than in the name of what he considered mental inventions, such as the idea that the state of nature represents an ideal from which mankind can draw principles for a utopian society. He saw nature as primitive and chaotic, and society as a fragile web that protects us from that chaos. "Society is indeed a contract," he wrote, "but . . . it is not a partnership in things . . . of a temporary and perishable nature. . . . It becomes a partnership . . . between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born."

What we had most vividly in mind as we browsed in Burke was the recent spate of decisions from the Supreme Court. In general, these decisions traced a dramatic turn to the right, although, in keeping with our system, the change had been in the making, piecemeal, for a long time. It started with Richard Nixon's longstanding antipathy to the reform-minded Warren Court, and it was carried on—through appointments of right-inclining justices—by Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan (although Ford's man, Stevens, turned out to be more liberal than anyone had expected), until what has been called a conservative majority was achieved. The decisions themselves reflected our detail-oriented system in their careful distinctions—in deciding, for example, that in a public building a crèche displayed alone violates the separation of church and state, while a Christmas tree and a menorah displayed together do not—and they also reflected a capacity for ideological inconsistency, as in their protection of flag-burning and pornography, on the one hand, and their purposeful dismantling of mechanisms for promoting racial justice, on the other. In Jett v. Dallas Independent School District the Court ruled that the 1866 Civil Rights Act could not be used to bring damage suits for racial discrimination against state or local governments. In Will v. Michigan Department of State Police it ruled that a 1978 precedent couldn't be used in suits against state governments. (Suits of this sort have been essential to the struggle for racial justice.) And in Patterson v. McLean Credit Union it ruled that a 1976 precedent barring discrimination in private employment applied only to the hiring stage of employment, and not to the way an employee was treated on the job. (The plaintiff in this last case, a black bank teller who worked in North Carolina, had been addressed with racial slurs, made to do menial tasks that white tellers were exempted from, and denied normal promotion.) Three other cases decided by the Court directly undermined affirmative action and class-action suits.



The civil-rights movement of the middle of this century is one of the great glories of our system. Through it a white establishment changed itself from within, drawing into closer social partnership a largely powerless and oppressed black minority. Protests by the minority and its supporters instigated this, but, since the minority had no power to coerce the majority, the transformation had a large voluntary component. The civil-rights revolution was a revolution done in Burkean style—bit by bit, case by case, through the legal system, until the accumulation of precedents amounted to a powerful agent of change in the direction of social justice. It is widely assumed that only individuals can act morally—that groups, societies, and nations understand only power. The civil-rights movement disproves that, and, however thoroughly we search our history, we will find few other passages as fine as this one.

The measured way in which the work of the civil-rights movement is being undone by the Court is also Burkean—thoroughly conservative—but the undoing itself is not. These decisions dismantle what has been created. They abolish the work of the recent past in order to return to a more distant one. In this they are destructive

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and retrogressive, rather than conservative. Burke's philosophy never embraced a return to the past; in fact, a belief in reform lies at the heart of his thought. He knew that societies that did not reform themselves would sicken and eventually be beyond conserving at all. His concern was not *whether* societies should change but *how* they should change. In "Reflections" he takes issue over and over again with destruction as an instrument of reform, and it is for this reason, not because he is opposed to reform, that the work is regarded as a conservative classic. "Is it in destroying and pulling down that skill is displayed?" he wrote of the French National Assembly. "Your mob can do this as well at least. . . . The shallowest understanding, the rudest hand, is more than equal to that task." The Supreme Court has proceeded in a conservative style, but it is as if it had applied that style to a demolition: the slow, decorous destruction of something precious.

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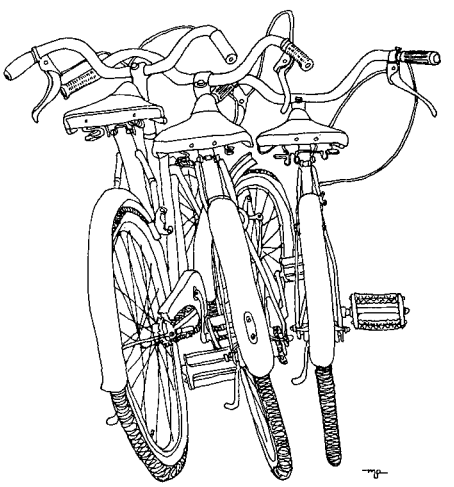
Squares

YOU know all about checkers. It's the board game you learn when you're too young for chess. You slide your pieces diagonally up the board; you jump your opponent; you get "kinged," and then you can move backward as well as forward; you win —or you lose. It's just checkers. It's no big deal. So we were surprised to learn recently that there is an International Checker Hall of Fame, in Petal, Mississippi (just north of Hattiesburg), and when we also learned that the Hall of Fame was sponsoring the International Goodwill Checkers Invitational Tournament—featuring world-class players from twenty-four nations, and amateurs from eleven others, with Poland, the Soviet Union, England, Senegal, the Netherlands Antilles, Ireland, India, Czechoslovakia, Gambia, France, Portugal, Canada, and Israel among those represented—we decided that there must be more to the game than we'd thought. On a Wednesday morning earlier this month, as the Goodwill Tournament was in full swing, we turned up in Petal.

Charles Walker, the founder and proprietor of the Hall of Fame, met us at the front door. "Come on along," he said. "There's lots here to show you." We followed him into a large auditorium, where the titans of the checker-playing world were having breakfast. "Like most really complicated things, checkers seems easy on the surface," Mr. Walker said as he headed toward a door at the far end of the auditorium. "There are two different-sized checkerboards used in the world, for instance. The Americans, the British, and most other English-speaking nations—including India and Pakistan—use a sixty-four-square board, while the mainland Europeans, the Russians, and most of the African nations use a one-hundred-square board. The Canadians have their own checkerboard—a hundred-and-forty-four-square thing —but nobody takes that game very seriously. Anyway, the rules for the two boards are a little different, and each version has its own world champion. What we're sponsoring here this week is a tournament, with ten thousand dollars in prize money, for both the one-hundred-square and the sixty-four-square games."

Mr. Walker opened the door, revealing a long hallway choked with flags. "We call this the International Walk," he said. "The flags of all the checker-playing countries of the world —a hundred and seventy-two countries—are here." As we started down the hallway with Mr. Walker, he went on, "This tournament is our first step toward having both versions of checkers in the Olympic Games. To be accepted by the International Olympic Committee, we have to have thirty-five nations from three continents playing checkers in sanctioned competition. We project that when checkers enters the Olympics it will generate more interest than any other event."



At the end of the International Walk, Mr. Walker opened another door, and led us onto a balcony overlooking a large, two-story room, its walls lined with framed photographs of checker players. "This is it—the Hall of Fame," he said. "This room is dedicated to the greats in checker history." The center of the floor was a sixteen-foot-square black-and-white checkerboard. It was covered with small checker tables for the tournament, but, Mr. Walker said, when no tournaments were taking place in the Hall the floor served as a sixty-four-square game board. The checkers used on that monster board were stowed in a corner; each was the size of a hassock.

A tall, gray-haired man with rectangular plastic-rimmed eyeglasses joined us on the balcony. Mr. Walker introduced him as Dr. Marion Tinsley, the reigning world checker champion on the sixty-four-square board, and told us that Dr. Tinsley, a retired mathematics professor from Tallahassee, was not playing in the Invitational Tournament but was serving as its co-sponsor, along with him. "I decided to be co-sponsor—to put up some of the prize money, that is—because I want to give something back to the game," Dr. Tinsley said.

The players began entering the Hall and taking seats at the small tables. "In sixty-four-square tournament checkers, your first three moves are chosen randomly from a shuffled deck of cards that have the different opening moves printed on them," Dr. Tinsley said. "Your first strategic move is actually your fourth. That way, you can't play your favorite opening every time. It broadens the game dramatically. After three moves, there are a hundred and forty-odd possible openings for a player to consider, compared with only twenty in chess." Below us, the games were heating up. Dr. Tinsley and Mr. Walker discussed certain moves being made by the competitors, referring to some of the strategies as "elegant," "graceful," and "masterful." We could feel tension in the air.

"Let's go where we can talk," Dr. Tinsley said. "We're distracting the players." We all went into Mr. Walker's office, which was right off the balcony, adjoining the Hall. Shelves surrounding his desk held hundreds of books on checker strategy, in Dutch, in

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Russian, in English. A chessboard with chessmen sat on a table at one side of the room. "Look—chess!" Dr. Tinsley said. "I played chess for a while, but I grew bored with it. You think only one or two moves ahead in that game, and then you simply apply chess theory. In checkers, the best players think twenty or thirty moves ahead. It requires immense concentration, memory, and imagination. And it forges good friendships. You think as your opponent will think fifteen or twenty moves down the line, and he's doing the same to you. You come to know a person's mind that way."

"This next one goes out to all those who have ever been in love, then become engaged, gotten married, participated in the tragic deterioration of a relationship, suffered the pains and agonies of a bitter divorce, subjected themselves to the fruitless search for a new partner, and ultimately resigned themselves to remaining single in a world full of irresponsible jerks, noncommittal weirdos, and neurotic misfits."

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Anahid

THE Anahid Sofian Studio, on West Fifteenth Street, looks just the way the studio of a teacher and performer of Middle Eastern dance should look. It has a well-worn floor; a mirrored wall, to let you study your belly rolls; and hanging displays—in appearance halfway between an ethnological exhibit and a clothes rack in a bazaar—of costumes, veils, and tambourines. A few years ago, Anahid showed us that Middle Eastern belly dancing is neither bumps and grinds nor an exercise in impenetrable ethnicity, and recently, when she held a party for students and friends at which she was to perform, we made it a point to be there.

Eighty-five people ringed the studio walls, in chairs or crouching on the floor. Four musicians—one on oud, one on violin, one on dumbek (a hand-held drum), and one on electric bass—warmed up the crowd with Gypsy tunes. Anahid, who was opening bottles of white wine in an adjoining kitchen, told us to grab a seat.

Knowing that Anahid would be busy with last-minute preparations, we had done our interviewing beforehand. "I grew up in Washington Heights, in a very strict Armenian family," she had told us. "I never even saw belly dancing as a child. When I was in my twenties, I joined a modern-dance company. I was precocious, but I didn't have the physical stamina, and I got severe tendinitis. After three years, my doctor told me I could dance but not do anything classical."

It was then, in the late sixties, that she made her first acquaintance with belly dancing, she said. The place to see it in New York at the time was what performers called Greektown, a stretch of Eighth Avenue in the upper Twenties, where there was a cluster of clubs with Lawrence Durrell names like Port Said, the Grecian Cave, and the Egyptian Gardens. The clientele included the owners of Greek diners, with a few uptown types—Leonard Bernstein, Thelonious Monk—thrown in. "I saw my first dancer at Port Said, and I was hooked," Anahid recalled. "A musician showed me how to play finger cymbals, and I would practice three hours a night. Once, I ran into one of my neighbors and apologized for the noise. He said, 'It bothered me at first, but then I got used to it, and then you got good.' "

Anahid's apprenticeship was not an easy one. The established dancers resented newcomers, and the musicians practiced hazing. "They would screw up the music deliberately, or sing obscene words to your veil work," Anahid said. "When you weren't dancing, you had to sit onstage and play a drum or else smoke and look tough." She began dancing in suburban supper clubs, where the pay and the treatment were better, but where the bands knew only two songs (always the same two) and she sometimes found she was the warmup act for a stripper. Greektown is gone now, and so are most of the suburban clubs, and Anahid teaches four classes a week in her studio and dances occasionally in the ethnic spots that remain. She believes in bringing Middle Eastern dance to a larger audience, and has performed at the now defunct New York Dance Festival and in the sculpture garden of the Museum of Modern Art.

Anahid was sharing the evening with another dancer, a former student

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who uses the stage name Myriam, which is also her real name. Myriam danced two numbers alone and then two with Anahid, in one of which both dancers wore Armenian folk costume: floor-length skirts, wrist-length sleeves, scarves tied under the chin and up around crownlike headdresses. The piece was surprisingly flirtatious.

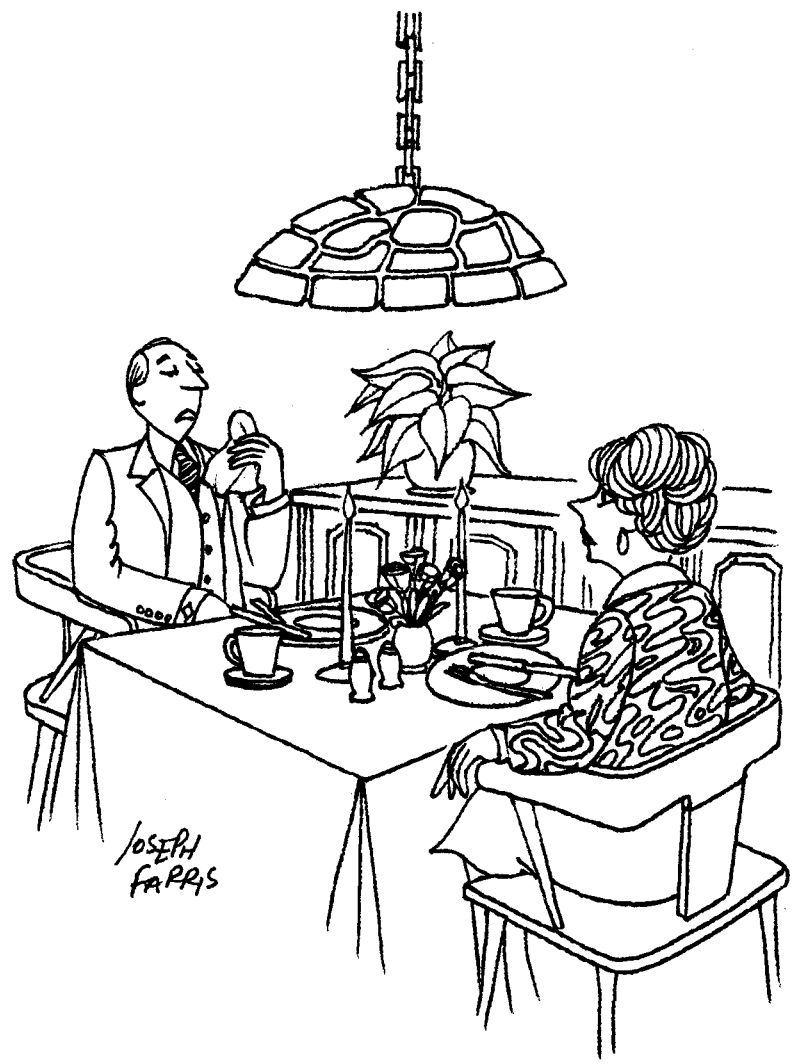
For the finale, Anahid appeared alone, in a silver-and-gold top and belt, three skirts (black, silver, and yellow), a silver armlet, and a golden veil. A belly-dance routine is done to a suite of four or more dance tunes. Two of Anahid's melodies that night were out of the ordinary: a Kurdish song in 10/8 time and a Turkish Gypsy song in 9/8. The trick in belly dancing is to maintain a steady motion, so that, even when the torso is engaged in small flutters and shimmies, the hips, the feet, and the arms keep going. Especially the arms. When their curve seems to extend out beyond the fingertips, it's a sign that the dancer knows what she's doing. Salome danced with seven veils; Anahid made one veil look like six or seven different things. She unfurled it as if to spread it for a ground cloth or a launch into flight; wore it like a shawl or a bridal train; suspended it from upstretched arms like a canopy. She had previously laid her finger cymbals on the floor near the band, and she took them up for the third movement. The heavier the cymbal, the better the sound. She coaxed muted clicks from them, and rackety clatters, long rhythmic patterns, and surprising short accents. The heart of the routine came with the fourth movement, which was floor work, done to an earthy beat called *chifte telli:* Anahid sank to one knee and pulled herself slowly along with her free leg, and she rested on both knees to do backbends. Arabs consider floor work unseemly, but Anahid's had the air of an urgent communication. She ended to a folk tune, shaking her skirts. She had danced for half an hour, and she was bathed in sweat. The audience was whooping. Afterward, she wondered, needlessly, if it had gone well.

Cowboy Joe

WHEN Paul Aaron invited us to go on a Western-style trail ride with him, we said yes right away, because we thought it might be our last chance. Aaron is the former host of "Cowboy Joe's Radio Ranch," a music-and-talk show that for twelve years galloped onto the WKCR-FM airwaves on Sundays at high noon. But he and the station parted company last year; then he quit his job selling communications systems; and now he says he's moving from his apartment, on the Upper West Side, to Wyoming. Trail-riding was one of the things that Aaron talked about a lot when "Cowboy Joe's Radio Ranch" was on the air. (Sometimes he'd spend most of a program rounding up people to join him for a Western ride.) He also talked about controversial Western subjects, like Rocky Mountain oysters, and between spells of talking he played cowboy music—songs about elbowroom and being untamable, with some lonesome yodelling thrown in here and there.

He picked us up on a Sunday morning in his car, a white 1974 Ford Maverick with Wyoming license plates. Instead of numbers on his plates he has the word "POKE," short for "cowpoke." He bought the car from a cowgirl in Cheyenne this winter when he was there to look for a radio job, and then he put some bumper stickers and decals on it that say things like "MY OTHER CAR IS A HORSE," "I BRAKE FOR COWGIRLS," "WYOMING RODEO ASSOCIATION," and "WARNING—ELECTRONIC BURGLAR ALARM SYSTEM." (The last isn't really a Wyoming type of message, and it doesn't refer to a warning system that actually exists, but Aaron figured that it couldn't hurt.) Inside, there were some sprigs of tumbleweed and sagebrush on the rear deck, and some Western reading material, like the catalogue for Justin Discount Boot & Cowboy Outfitters.

Aaron is proof that in Manhattan a straw cowboy hat, a pearl-buttoned cowboy shirt, cowboy-cut Wrangler jeans, and used-looking cowboy boots will go a long way toward making a person seem like a cowboy. You don't have to be the Marlboro Man. You can have eyeglasses with thin tortoiseshell frames, and be not-tall, and pronounce "talk" like "toe-awk," because being a cowboy is, more than anything



"I don't have to be a good loser. I never lose."

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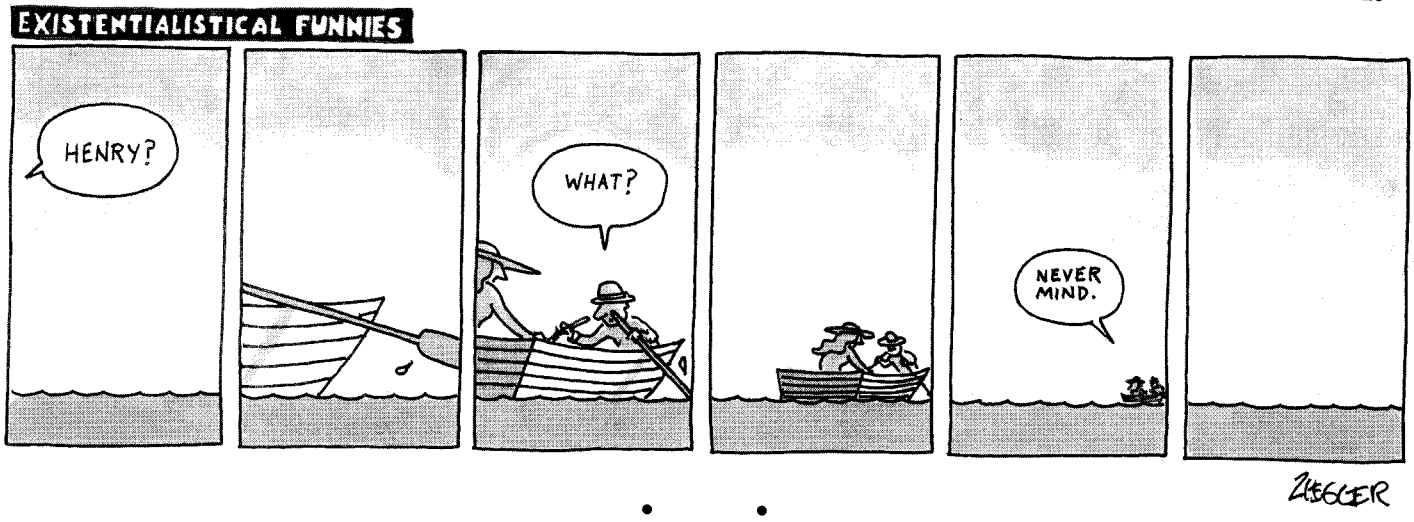

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else, a state of mind. Similarly, a Western trail ride does not have to take place on the high plains. It can take place sixty-five miles from midtown Manhattan, at a place Aaron knows about in Pennsylvania. And you can get in the trail-riding mood much easier if you take Route 1, an old stop-and-go highway, and play cowboy songs on the tape deck. First, Aaron played an Australian group singing "Ragtime Cowboy Joe," which he had heard for the first time at a basketball game between the University of Wyoming (it's the school song) and Colorado State, where he was briefly an undergraduate. (Aaron was born in Leonia, New Jersey, and he came back East in 1969. After getting a master's degree from Teacher's College in psychology in education, and before starting the radio show, he worked as an elementary-school psychologist in Louisiana.)

As we crossed the Hackensack River and pushed into Newark, a yodeller sang about being a wild cow-catcher, and Aaron said he hoped he'd relax when the driving got easier. The Maverick was acting up—the steering wheel was stiff, and the transmission bellowed faintly at odd times—but that didn't bother Aaron too much. What bothered him was drivers who switched lanes without signalling, or did some other un-Wyoming-like thing, which he'd bring to their attention by blinking his headlights and gesturing.

Near New Brunswick (we were now listening to a Swedish band play "Take Me Back to Tulsa"), two motorcyclists in relaxed, feet-forward postures passed us, and Aaron pointed out that they sat on their cycles the way someone might sit on a horse. Then he told us to be on the lookout for an old house with a windmill that looked *exactly* like an old house with a windmill out West. We passed the big Johnson & Johnson corporate headquarters, the offices of the New Jersey Dental Association, a gas station, a Pic-a-Car, and the Oakdale Mobile Home Park, and there was the house with the windmill, and it did look like something from somewhere else. "I like travelling on the open road," Aaron said. "I like doing things the masses don't do. I'm cut from a different mold. I guess I consider myself the James Dean of Western music and culture."

At Newtown, Pennsylvania, which looks more like New England than like Wyoming, we turned off for the stable. Aaron had brought his own Western saddle, and he rode his special horse, Typhoon—a tall, handsome chestnut, who is easiest to get on if you climb up on a box. We rode a sorrel horse named Solomon, and followed Aaron on a two-hour trip through Tyler State Park, which is wooded and full of trails, and where, because of the intense afternoon heat and the horseflies, it felt better to trot, or even gallop. Aaron rode in a heads-up, confident manner. "Is this the open spaces, or is this the open spaces?" he called back to us. Toward the end of the ride, Typhoon threw a shoe, and Aaron had to walk back to the stable. But he had some Wash & Dris in the car, and had thought to put a sun protector—a cardboard one with a Rocky Mountain scene on it—behind the windshield, so he recovered fairly quickly.

On the way back to the city, we stopped at a place called the Dallas BBQ, a dark-pink stucco building decorated inside with things like Indian arrowheads and crossed snowshoes and different brands of barbed-wire. A singer in the dining room was crooning "Rocky Mountain High." We went into the bar. Aaron ordered frozen yogurt, and showed us his Wyoming driver's license and his Wyoming Visa card, with a bucking bronco on it, and told us why he was heading West for good. "I'm miserable here," he said. "Out West, people have more time for each other. Maybe I'm wrong about that, but I don't think so. They value people more out there. I don't feel stimulated by the city's hustle and bustle, though I probably did at one time. But the city itself was a more humane place ten or fifteen years ago. I think people were a little nicer to each other then."

We drove most of the way to the city on two-lane highways, which Aaron likes because of the greenery and the elbowroom. He drove slowly, and played cowboy music. We didn't talk much. When cars came up close behind him, he pulled over to let them pass, because he doesn't like to be rushed. He figured that it would take about two hours to get back, but we were way behind schedule even before we came to a bottleneck at the George Washington Bridge, because the two-lane highways in New Jersey aren't marked very well and it's easy to get lost and end up in residential neighborhoods. Each time that happened, Aaron stopped and asked someone on the street or in a yard how to get to Manhattan. Most of the people looked at the Wyoming plates and the stickers and Aaron's cowboy hat. Then they thought for a minute. Then they launched into very detailed, very friendly explanations—the kind you give to someone who is clearly a long way from home.

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THE MUSIC ROOM

WE are spending a portion of the summer in the secluded "cottage"—a twelve-room stone house with a slate mansard roof and a view of Narragansett Bay—that has been in Father's family since he was a child. For the past ten or eleven years, the house has sat empty, but last winter, on a whim, Mother decided to have it done over and then spend July and August here. It is a negligible departure from her usual reclusiveness, since we are as isolated here, by our circumstances and personalities, as we are at home in Virginia, or anywhere else. The house, on the other hand, seems full to me: Felicia Snow, Mother's old drinking buddy (overweight, a man-eater), has descended for a stay of indefinite length; Father has as his guest the semi-famous composer with whom Perry, my younger brother, will later study, Max Dolotov (up from New York, also an alcoholic, and attracted to wealth as pitifully as Father—the failed pianist—is to any sort of musical success); and the extraordinary Raymond, our middle-aged, chain-smoking "help" of sixteen years, who, with a local temporary staff, oversees everything—cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundering, gardening.

Mother has done the interior of the house in such bright colors that you are startled when you enter a room, and the first impulse is to recoil. There's a good deal of trompe-l'oeil around as well, so the over-all effect is hostile: first your eye is assaulted, then tricked. Felicia is quite fond of all this; today, when she enters the garden room (spring green and fuchsia), where Mother, Perry, and I are having our morning coffee, she stands near the threshold for a moment and takes a deep breath, oscillating her head and smiling, not at us but at the room. Perry leans over to me and whispers, "She's trying to figure out how to *drink* it," and I nearly choke on the gulp of coffee I've just taken.

"You want organic, we'll make it organic."

We can see Father and Max Dolotov strolling out on the lawn in the distance. Dolotov, in his sixties, a contemporary and friend of Father's father, has grown more and more comical-looking out here, in the sun, as his hair has turned whiter, his face redder. Father, who is only in his forties, is increasingly soft-spoken and gentle these days, and lately there are times when it appears that he is quietly listening to some uncharitable voice of authority: he goes still as a statue, his face twitches, his eyes moisten. Worse, he has developed a number of phobias—fear of tunnels, of bridges, of close rooms; he loses his breath, his heart flutters, and during an especially bad attack he will begin tearing at his clothes. His interim doctor, here in Newport, has told him that he suffers from severe gastritis and must abstain from liquor, so Father drinks Scotch-and-milk. Out on the lawn now, he gestures broadly with his arms—he must be describing to Dolotov the extent of the property, what it is nowadays as compared to what it was in his own father's day. For a moment I try to imagine my parents twenty years ago: Father handsome, impulsive, strolling up this stretch of lawn toward the house, arm in arm with the astonished young chorus girl he swept away from a Las Vegas casino while on leave from the Navy—a particularly celebrative leave, since his squadron had just escaped being shipped to Okinawa. I try to imagine his astonished parents, those serious, dignified faces I have seen in photographs—Virginian aristocracy, unaccustomed to astonishment.

"Come on," Perry says to me, wiping his chin with a linen napkin, then tapping me on the arm.

"Where are you boys off to?" Mother asks, putting down a newspaper. Perry is already out of the room, however, and I, trailing behind, am suddenly face to face with Felicia and her dyed, jet-black beehive; now that she is extremely tan, she has taken to wearing lots of gold hardware—heavy

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chains and enormous hammered things, like artifacts stolen from the Mayan ruins. "Good morning, Jesus," she sings, giving me a naughty look, as if my long hair and scraggly beard were something risqué.

"Marty," Mother calls as I'm about to leave the garden room. "I asked you where you boys are off to."

I haven't the slightest idea where we're off to, and I see that this is a way of life this summer: Perry has the agenda; I follow. In truth, I don't much care what I do. I've returned from my sophomore year at Harvard, having lost my virginity to my best friend's girl, and having lost my best friend as a result. I'm trying to pretend that I'm beyond the reach of this recent past; I'm happy to have Perry chart the course of the present. Even at sixteen, he's good at it. We spend most of our days at the beach club: we have lunch there, swim in the ocean, swim in the pool, and snub almost everyone we see; we're quite above all the idle cabaña talk. We declined one or two party invitations the first week we were here —news that spread quickly—and now we are no longer invited anywhere. I'm reading "A Separate Peace." We sleep. From my viewpoint, the days here are dull, without substance, but this perception has something to do with whatever success I've had at burying my feelings. I'm long inured to the chaos going on around me, fuelled by the flow of liquor in the house and at the beach club; that's an old habit. But recently I've caught myself once or twice in such a torpor, in such a state of numbness, that I've wondered if I might not levitate. The one constant in all of this—the miracle—is that every day at four, no matter what else happens, Perry and I are in the house, in separate rooms, practicing our music. Often, Father visits us, listens to my cello, to Perry's piano, sometimes comments. After Perry and I are done, one of us always asks the other, "Did he say anything?"—as if Father were already a ghost, an apparition haunting the corners of our rehearsal rooms, and we were eager to know whether or not it spoke this time.

I take a stab at answering Mother's question: "We're going to the club, I guess."

"Well, it seems to me that you might ask someone if they might like to go to the club, too," she says.

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In stark contrast with Father's failing health this summer, Mother is experiencing a reborn gaiety, which seems to have Perry as its focus, and what Mother means now is that she is feeling abandoned by him. Apparently I am giving her a curious look, because she says, "Well, you *might*. . . ."

"I'll tell Perry," I say, and leave the room.

PERRY is playing backgammon with Mother at a low wicker table in the shade of the cabaña. Father and Dolotov sit in chaise longues nearby, talking, drinking. I'm close by, too, but I've pulled my chair into the sun, near the edge of the short concrete wall that drops to the beach. Felicia has not yet returned from lunch at the beach club; she tends to linger, with Martinis, in shady spots, and she has become one of the sights here this summer as she strolls the boardwalk, from cabaña to bar and back again in her colorful tent dresses.

The rattle of dice, muffled by felt and cork, and the slap of the markers that punctuate Perry and Mother's games begin to have a meaning of their own—or so it occurs to me, in an entirely sun-drenched sort of way. Occasionally, I hear Perry say, "You die," and later, often much later, Mother say, "Oh, *do* I?" Mother is wearing a bikini, and still looks good in it. She's very dark, her hair long and sun-bleached, pulled back and held at the nape of her neck with a gold barrette. So far, her old addiction to grooming hasn't been wasted by her other addiction.

Oddly, I am just thinking about how she likes to play backgammon for

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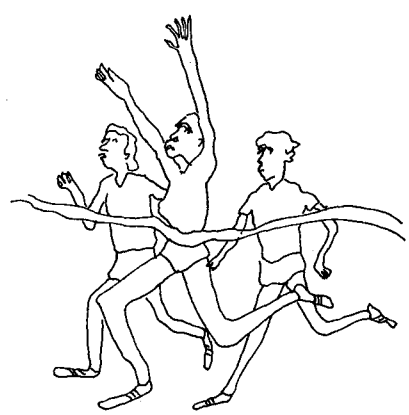
money and how she can't keep her hands off the doubling cube when I hear Dolotov—moving his drink glass in small circles, churning the ice—say loudly to Father, "Well, you must like a lot of doublings in the strings if you're fond of his chamber music."

I've already overheard them talking of Brahms, and this remark sounds to me like an attack on Father's taste. I know for a fact that he is practically reverent about the piano quintet, which —when he was still playing—he occasionally performed with a local quartet in Norfolk. That was before he made his début as a solo artist, eight years ago, when he was already in his thirties. During the period just before the début recital, he was sober—which Mother didn't seem to like very much. He would practice long hours each day while she played cards and got what she called "house-drunk" with her friends in the library. Sometimes she and her friends would try to lure Father away from the music room, which usually resulted in an unpleasant scene. Eventually, Father rented a recital hall in downtown Norfolk and hired an advertiser to publicize the recital. The performance was well attended, and was reasonably short. He played a program of Classical and Romantic music, which received a good review in the *Virginian-Pilot/Ledger-Star*. But afterward, for reasons unknown to Perry and me, he never prepared another recital, never performed again, anywhere at any time. When we were old enough to wonder about this, he avoided our questions, would only say that he'd not really been cut out for a concert career. And over the next eight years he drank himself into the kind, quiet daydreamer who now sits on the beach next to Dolotov and squints out toward the bay and smiles. "When I was a child, we had a copy of that famous drawing of Brahms," he begins, and I notice that Mother stares at his profile for a moment and then rolls her eyes. "The one with the potbelly and the long beard," Father continues. "Each Christmas, my mother would paste a felt Santa Claus hat on the picture's glass, just over Brahms's head. . . ."

Dolotov scrutinizes Father for a long time after this, and follows Father's gaze, toward the greenish water and the sky, as if to find some clearer intelligence on the horizon. Eventually, Dolotov brushes the thick mat of white hair on his chest—an insect has flown into the snowy forest—then quietly sips his drink.

Mother offers Perry the doubling cube. "Give me a break," Perry says, and he plucks the cube from the board and throws it far out into the sand. Mother is instantly up and around the table, delighted, and begins slapping at Perry's head, saying, "You get out there this minute, you little chicken shit, and find that cube!"

Perry covers his head with his hands, laughing, and says, "All right, all right . . ." until she stops. Mother stands with her hands on her hips, the taskmaster. "How *dare* you?" she says as Perry rises and walks toward the steps that lead down to the sand. When he reaches them, however, he quickly turns in the opposite direction and sprints toward the pool behind the line of cabañas. Mother shouts, "You are no gentleman, you chicken shit!," then saunters, still with hands on hips, after him. Father buries his face in his hands, appalled. Dolotov clears his throat and looks right and left, very much the gentleman himself, and I notice that one white-bearded testicle hangs out below the hem of his trunks.



After a minute, Perry returns, breathing hard. Father's index finger is up, beckoning him silently. Then Perry does something he does extraordinarily well: he goes to Father, lays a thin brown arm across his chest, and puts his face quite near Father's. "Pop?" he says.

"Where is Helen?" Father asks.

"Getting a drink."

"Mr. Dolotov has never seen anyone conduct in three-four and four-four at the same time," Father says.

"You mean like this?" Perry says, and he gets the triangle going with his right hand, then adds the inverted "T" with the left, three against four, easy as you please.

Dolotov laughs and turns to me, his head at an odd angle, his mouth slack, so that I can see an abundance of gold fillings. "Can you do it?" he asks cheerfully.

I suddenly think about my best friend's girl, Camilla Parker, as thin and frail as a pipette in the school science lab—about our fumbling and finally successful night on her family-room couch, as we lay in pitch dark listening to the enraptured groans and barks of her psychiatrist father making it with his college-student girlfriend in the bedroom down the hall: it's the blossoming of the sixties. I push all

HAZE

hangs heavy
down into trees: dawn
doesn't break today,
the morning
seeps into being, one
bird, maybe
two, chipping
away at it. A white dahlia,
big
as Baby Bumstead's head,
leans
its folded petals
at a window, a lesson
in origami.
Frantically, God
knows what
machine: oh no,
just Maggio's
garbage truck.
Stare
at all the roughage
that hides an estuary,
and such urbanity
seems inapt: the endless city
builds on and on,
thinning out, here and there,
for the wet green velvet towels
("slight imperfections")
of summer
("moderately priced")
and a hazy morning
in August,
even that
we may grow to love.

—James Schuyler

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these images away with an effort of will greater than any other I've had to muster so far today. "No," I say to Dolotov and stare determinedly down at the blurred words on the pages of my novel.

"ANY good?" Perry asks, squatting in the sand, looking over my shoulder at the book.

I've pulled my chair out onto the beach. "The print is nice and big," I say. "Boarding-school types during World War II. Everybody's going a little crazy."

"At least it's not one of those books where some woman has to go out in the rain for some reason and then dies because of it. I hate those."

"Not so far," I say.

"Want to take a walk before practice?"

"Sure," I say. "You don't think Mother will be jealous?"

"What do you mean?"

"Don't tell me you haven't noticed."

We both look back at the cabaña. Felicia sits in a chair, rattling on about something, gesturing with her hands, her gold bracelets ringing; she can't see that Mother is sound asleep. Perry laughs. "She's just lonely this year," he says.

We start walking toward the water, and I think what a peculiar pair we are, off for a promenade before retiring to our practice rooms, to our cello and piano. Aren't most boys our ages playing softball, tennis, chasing girls, carousing, sneaking beer and (nowadays) marijuana? We would never have survived a public school, sheltered as we are by the roomy sanctuary of extreme privilege. It occurs to me that we have saved the world the trouble of casting us out. One of the differences between Perry and me is that I'm aware of this and he is not. I am cursed with a consciousness of options in a way that Perry has never been; though I auditioned for orchestra at school, and won first chair my sophomore year, I still think sometimes that I'll put down the cello, take up sculling on the Charles, be normal. This is a curse that comes with having a smaller gift: it's possibly expendable. But it would never occur to Perry to do anything of the sort; not using his musical gift would be like not using one of his senses.

Having found you guilty of the unauthorized appropriation of moonbeams in a jar, the court sentences you to not less than three but no more than five years of swinging on a star. Has the defendant any statement he'd wish to make?
Your Honor, if it please the court, I'd rather be a pig.
You fool! You have no idea what it's like! Believe me, you're better off as you are!

"Dolotov's a clown," he says as we walk toward the fence that divides the sparsely populated private beach from the very crowded public one.

"Why do you say that?" I ask.

"Because he is," Perry says. "And he's not very good to Father. He's so superior. And he's a drunk."

"He wouldn't be here if he weren't a drunk," I say.

"No," says Perry, "I guess not. He's a sponge to boot."

"That's not what I mean," I say. "I mean he wouldn't put up with us if he were sober."

Perry is quiet for a moment. Then he says, "Why are you so angry, Marty?"

"I'm not," I say.

"You are," he says. "All summer. Mother thinks so, too."

"Mother doesn't think," I say. "She *distills*."

"Well, she distills that you're angry," Perry says. "Which isn't any help to Father. Mother's bored with him this summer. Dolotov's a clown. And you're angry. What's he got to cheer him up?"

"You," I say. "That's your area."

"Marty," says Perry, "I haven't done anything to you."

"I didn't say you had. I just mean that you're the one who's always making everything all right, so you're the one who ought to do something."

"You're angry," he says.

"Perry," I say. "Do me a favor. Don't play shrink with me, O.K.? You're always cutting to the goddam heart of the matter, and if you want to know the truth it's pretty tiresome."

"I don't know what you're talking about."

"You do too," I say. "That's another thing. You walk around day and night being Mr. Incisive, and then

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when somebody tries to talk to you—I mean really talk to you, about *you*—you go stupid on him."

"Well, what *about* me?" he says.

"I don't like the way you manipulate them all the time, that's all," I say, floundering a bit.

"Who?"

"There you go again. Heckle and Jeckle, jerk-off. Who the hell do you think I mean?"

"All this just because I'm worried about Pop?"

"You're not worried about him," I say. "You just have this *need*. You can't leave anybody alone."

"Oh, you've been sulking ever since I conducted three against four for that clown Dolotov," Perry says. "It's not that hard, you know. I could teach you if you like."

"Oh, would you, please?" I say.

"Look," Perry says. "I've got an idea. Why don't we start over? Why don't I say, 'Why are you so angry?,' and you just answer the question?"

"Go fuck yourself," I say.

"Oh, I'm sorry, I've made a terrible mistake," he says. "I thought you were angry when obviously you're not." He turns and begins walking back the other way.

I stand watching him retreat for a moment, then he stops dead, shading his eyes with his hand, looking out at the water. "Marty," he calls with alarm in his voice, "what's that?"

I jog to where he stands, and follow the line of his pointing finger, but I don't see anything. "What?" I say.

"There," I hear him say, and when my attention is thoroughly trained on the horizon, he gives me a sharp jab to the stomach. "Go fuck *your*self," he says, tearing through the surf and diving into the breakers.

He disappears under the water for quite a long time, and as I search the swells for him I am surprised by an odd feeling of something like panic—the realest thing I've felt for some time. Then I see him, surfacing about fifty feet away. He stands, in waist-deep water, looking at me; when our eyes connect, he points at me, lets out a horselaugh. I begin walking through the water toward him; the beach noise grows louder—I can hear the high-pitched squeals of teen-age girls and young children, the chomping percussion of the breakers, and, more distantly, the frantic prattle of an AM radio announcer. I hold out my hand to him, saying, "Truce," but he stares warily at it, shaking his head. "No way," he says, but I don't move my hand, and after another moment he takes it and says, "Truce, you angry son of a bitch."

"Do you mind if I sit down? I often feel weak in the presence of great art."

ALMOST midnight, and a cool breeze blows in from the bay, whispering in the cedars. I lie swaying in the enormous hammock that is suspended from the ceiling in the garden room. I've turned off all the lamps: I'm in the dark, looking out at darkness. Occasionally, a pinpoint of light appears—a boat in the bay—and travels across the black scrim of the water like a slow meandering comet, millions of miles away.

Perry enters the room, closing the door behind him, walks quietly over to the hammock and climbs in. We lie in silence for a moment, then I hear his voice, even more hushed than usual. "Guess what I just saw," he says.

"What?"

"Dolotov," he says. "Upstairs. Coming out of Felicia's room wearing nothing but his underwear and flip-flops."

I feel the hammock shaking before Perry's laughter becomes audible. Then we're both laughing hard. "I guess she wore down his resistance," I say, still laughing.

"I guess," says Perry. Then, after another moment of silence, he says, "I wish you would go inside to the study and look at Father."

"Why?" I ask.

"Just go look," he says.

The house is entirely quiet now, except for the soft pop of the window screens, pushed and tugged by the wind. When I reach the study door, I see Father, sitting at his desk, the single desk lamp with its green glass shade the only light in the room. He's holding a stack of photographs, about an inch thick, under the cone of the lamplight. He looks up at me, unstartled, as if he were expecting me to appear at that instant. He smiles and says, "Marty. Did I ever show you my old Navy pictures?"

"No, Father," I say. "I don't think you ever did."

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"Come over here and sit down," he says, pointing to a nearby straight chair. "I took some of the goddam stomach medicine that quack is giving me, and I—well, Marty, frankly, I'm having some trouble telling which way these pictures are supposed to go. I can't tell what's right side up."

I take the chair over to the desk and sit next to him. There's something sweet-smelling about my handsome father, mixing with the bleachy smell of the white pajamas he's wearing. He holds an old yellowed photograph, with scalloped edges, under the light. "What in the hell is that?" he says.

"No," I say, turning the picture between his fingers. "This way."

"I still don't know what it is," he says.

"It's just some palm trees, Father," I say. "There's a building and some palm trees."

Perry comes in and gives me a collusive look. He pulls up another chair, on the other side of Father.

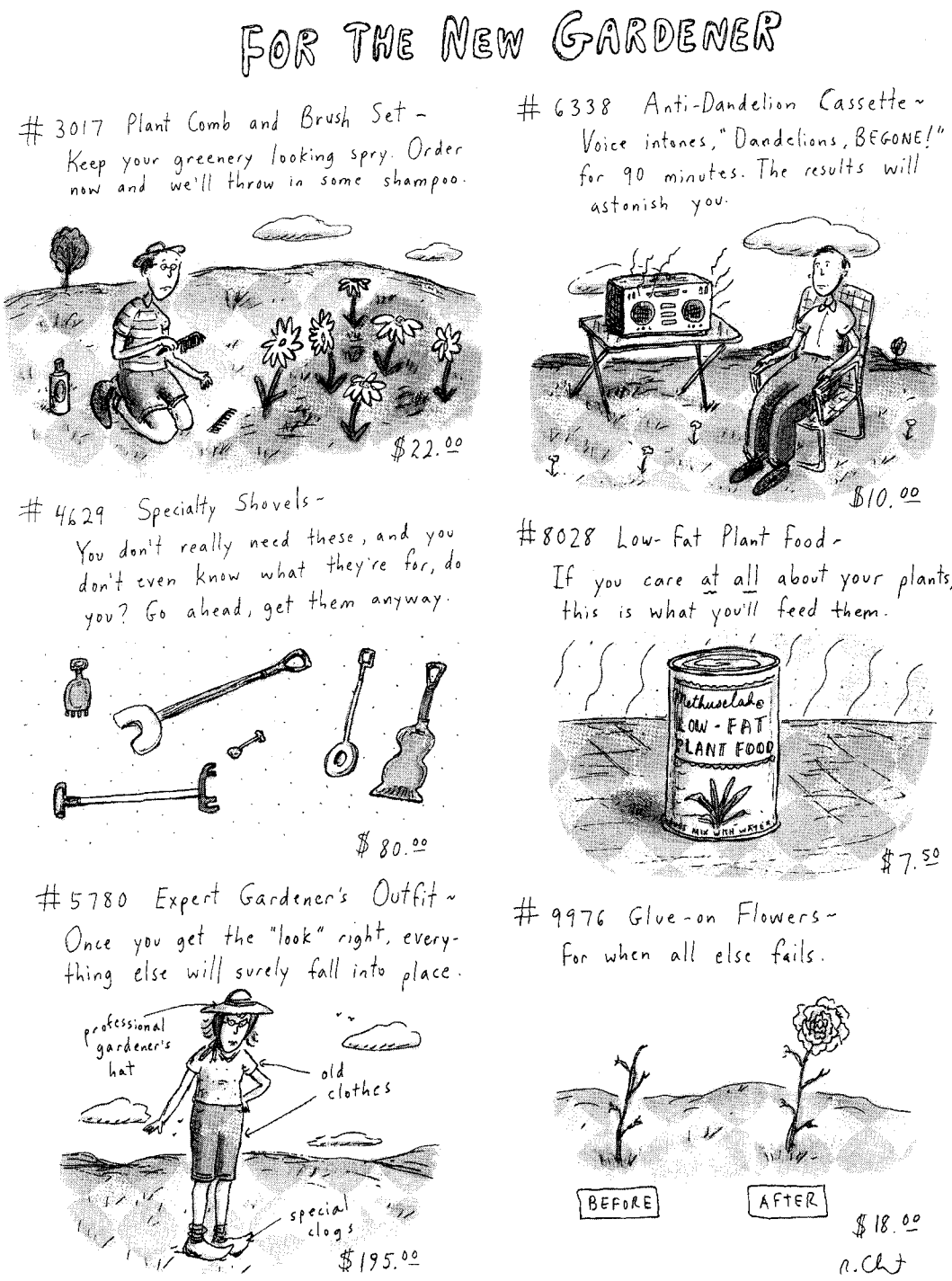
"Perry," Father says. "I bet *you* can tell us what this is."

"Marty's right, Pop," says Perry. "It's just some trees and a building. Probably something you thought was pretty. It looks like San Diego."

"Oh, Perry, I know that," Father says. "All of these are San Diego. The question is not the name of the city."

"Sorry, Pop," Perry says. "It's late. What say we all go to bed."

Father looks up at Perry, then turns and looks at me, then back at Perry—as if he were noticing for the first time that we are in the room with him. "You boys go," he says. Then he looks down at the photograph and says, "Palm trees. That's helpful."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In the hallway we find Raymond, leaning against a wall, striking a kitchen match on the sole of a shoe and lighting a cigarette. Dressed in white pants and short-sleeved shirt, and with a stack of white towels under one arm, Raymond looks like an orderly in a hospital. "Marty," he says to me, "do me a favor. Take these up to the linen closet. Don't make me climb those stairs one more time today."

"Why are you doing laundry this time of the night?" says Perry.

"Insomnia," Raymond says. "Is he still up, too?"

"Yes," I say.

Handing me the stack of towels and turning back toward the study, Raymond says, "I'll see what I can do." There is not the slightest hint of judgment or impatience in his tone as he says this. Before Raymond came to work for us, he had been a chef at Cleo's, the restaurant in the Fountainbleau downtown. Father, noticing one Christmas that the food there was not

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quite what it had been, inquired after Raymond and learned that he had been let go. He sought him out and found Raymond ill. He had suffered multiple relapses of bronchitis and had been replaced at Cleo's because of his frequent illness. Father immediately had Raymond moved to our house and attended by his own doctor. When he was fully recovered, he took over as cook for us, and eventually he took over in every other capacity. When Raymond says, "I'll see what I can do," it is comforting: because he is in Father's debt, Father listens to him as he does to no one else—not even Perry.

Perry and I watch Raymond enter the study; then, as we climb the stairs, Perry says, behind me, "Now once more, *al dente*." It is a reference to a comical thing Father sometimes does when he listens to us practice—a thing he has done since we were young children: at the end of what we're playing, he lowers his head in concentration and very seriously says, "Now once more, *al dente*," and it invariably makes us laugh.

As we reach the landing at the top of the stairs, Perry adds, "I think he's dying, Marty."

I turn to him. "That's ridiculous," I say. "He's too young."

WE are to leave for Norfolk tomorrow. Father has been arrested two times, only a few days apart, for drunken driving. Much in the manner of Old West law enforcement, he has been told, essentially, to take his family and get out of town. Our departure will be only two weeks earlier than originally planned, and it, like the arrests themselves, has been, for Father, an entirely passive experience. He endured all discussion on the subject in his best statuesque style—agreeable to almost anything, terse when a response was absolutely necessary. He did appear to be listening, but it was always to the voices in his reveries. I have finally come to believe that he is in a state of partial anesthesia. Drink, to Father, is like an abusive parent—both source and comforter of pain.

Today, Raymond banged on our bedroom doors early, rushed us through pastries and coffee, and sent us on our way to the beach. "And stay out" were his last words to us, meaning that he wants to prepare everything for our departure in peace. Dolotov has already returned to New York, but Felicia Snow is still with us, loyal to Mother in what she perceives to be Mother's time of trial. Actually, Mother is resilient, and even displays some junkie pride: she has been kicked out of chorus lines, barrooms, casinos, and ladies' clubs, but never out of *town*.

On this, our last day, Felicia is treating us all to lunch at the club. It's midday, very hot even on the club's breezy, shaded terrace. Father is dressed in what has become a uniform these last couple of weeks: white trousers and a long-sleeved white shirt, which he buttons at the neck—making him look prim, buttoned-in, as if he were dressed by someone else. He says he's had enough of the sun, and wears this costume even on the beach. Felicia has selected something called the "Diet Lovers' Special," a beef patty and cottage cheese; the rest of us are having hamburgers, except Father, who ordered a single boiled egg with toast. He wipes egg from the corner of his mouth and says, "George Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue.' " After quite a long pause, he says, "Ah . . . and Joseph Stalin became dictator of Russia."

Exceptionally talkative today—and more lucid than usual—Father is once again recounting the significant events of 1924 (the year of his birth), 1946 (of mine), and 1950 (Perry's). It was once a familiar chant—we heard it throughout our growing up. Now he struggles and strains for the facts, but cheerfully, as if having to reach for them makes them all the more cherished.

" 'Saint Joan,' " Perry says during the next lull.

"That's right," says Father. " 'Saint Joan,' by Bernard Shaw. Now please don't tell me any more. Ah, well, Puccini died, not quite having finished 'Turandot.' And . . ."

Felicia begins singing, in a mock-operatic voice, the melody to "Un bel dì."

"That's 'Madama Butterfly,' Felicia," Father says, entirely serious, pronouncing "Butterfly" "Boot-terfly," "but you've got the right composer. Now let's see, there's definitely something else—don't tell me, Perry."

" 'Magic Mountain,' " I say.

"Martin," says Father. "Yes, 'The Magic Mountain,' by Thomas Mann.

"Diego, Ned, Johannes—did it ever occur to you you're just flipping channels?"

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And poor Franz Kafka died, author of 'The Trial.' "

"I read that," Mother says, her mouth full.

"You most certainly did not," says Father.

"I did," says Mother. "You don't know what I've read and what I haven't. That's the book where the guy splits the old woman's head open with a hatchet and then he can't get anybody—"

"You couldn't be more mistaken, Helen," Father says, "and besides, you're interrupting."

Mother makes a ghastly, priggish face—her eyes wide, her lips pursed—and wags her head in mockery of Father's correctness. This gets a belly laugh from Felicia.

"Now, Martin," Father says, "what two very significant things happened in 1946?"

"You mean you want me to say them out loud?" I ask.

"*If* you can remember," he says.

"Well, the Nuremberg trials were going on," I say, "and the United Nations met for the first time."

"And in the world of music?" he asks.

"I forget," I say.

"And you a cellist," Father says.

"Shostakovich," I say.

"The Third String Quartet," Perry says. "Now do 1950, Pop."

"Right," I say, rather weakly.

"1950," says Father, gripping the bamboo arms of his chair and squinting into the glare of the beach beyond the terrace. In a fit of fastidiousness he has overclipped his graying mustache—his upper lip, usually in hiding, looks sadly exposed—and the clear light on his face ignites the spidery network of blood vessels beneath the skin of his cheeks. Slowly he says, "Let's see, there was T. S. Eliot's 'The Cocktail Party.' "

"*I* wrote that," says Felicia.

"And . . ." Father, stumped for a moment, closes his eyes.

"He's gone to sleep," Mother says. "Rudy, wake up."

"Of course I was just a tiny child in 1950," says Felicia, "but—" Her face suddenly pales—she is looking in horror at Father—and when we turn to him he has dropped his chin to his chest. There is a luxuriant stream of blood flowing down from his nose, over his mouth and chin, drenching the front of his white shirt. Felicia says, "Jesus," a gasp escapes Mother's throat as she turns violently away—the sight of blood makes her ill—and she says, calmly, quietly, "Boys, do something. Help him."

• •

HE is stupefied, paralyzed by humiliation. He refuses to be taken to the hospital—says he's had nosebleeds since he was a child (though we haven't seen one before this)—and he won't allow Mother or Felicia into the car with us; they stay at the club while Perry and I take him home. I drive the Lincoln, Perry sits with him in the back seat, and by the time we arrive at the house—only a five-minute ride—the bleeding has stopped. Father insists we take him directly to his room, without enlisting any help from Raymond.

Inside the room—a spacious bedroom upstairs, on the corner of the house facing the bay—we get him into a morris chair with pink upholstered cushions. Father removes the soaked cloth napkin he's been holding beneath his nose, and I carry it into the white-tiled bathroom. As I drop it into the sink, I hear Perry's voice, shaky: "Marty, it's started again." I return with a white bath towel, and when I give it to Father he quickly presses a corner of it over his mouth and chin, tilting his head far back, and looks up at me—a meaningful look, which I don't get—and then he jerks his head impatiently in Perry's direction. Perry stands a few feet away, rigid, his hands stuffed into the pockets of his shorts, and, to my astonishment, tears are running down his cheeks. Father jerks his head again: he's telling me to get Perry out of the room, but Perry, seeing this, turns and leaves of his own accord.

The minute Perry is gone, Father

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MOVING

She is moving
out over the thresholds
of worn brass, under
scratched lintels.

The bones of the house
are showing, and all its pitted
edges, its years
of wear and abiding.

The rain stops, leaving
behind it the slaphappy song
of full gutters, hornbeam and
hickory leaves slick

with light. She's been years
breathing and sleepwalking
among them, putting meals
on the shaky table, making

beds and other decisions. She
stands in the doorway
drinking the sky in, drowning
under a cloudy rush

of lilacs, caught up
in a web of gnats
frantic and ecstatic at
a riddling patch of sunlight.

She keeps one eye
on the baby, whose hair floats
in its own silken light. She will
hide herself at noon

in the shadows that travel
a sheet of unbleached cotton
strung between two branches
and swaying in the sun: folds

of shadow swell and
shrink; a mouth of
painted air, a world of shadows
spilling out of it; beautiful

and arching the arms
of branches. She is putting
it all behind her, wondering
what shape forgiveness

takes, what name her father
wore in his suit of
bamboo green, twirling his
whiskers for the ladies and

crooning ragtime, crooning
Schubert. Her mother's face
hides behind the furniture
in the cobwebbed dust, turning

away and saying
I told you so.
In the cellar
her husband the woodchuck
mopes among the spent
motors, rooting around
for her tongue. Nothing here
is home anymore: worn

brass thresholds, glass
and golden doorknobs, fretted
lintels are all
she knows. And the timber

groaning at the heart
of plaster walls. So she's
moving out
into sea light that seems

to run on and on, damasked
with cloud the color of
bridal wreath or the
empty bedroom. When she's gone

she knows the dreams will
gather near the fireplace
like the smell of pine resin—
a faint perturbation

shaking the air. She knows
they will talk together
like elders, in low
fathoming voices, and then

they will set out to find her.

—EAMON GRENNAN

• •

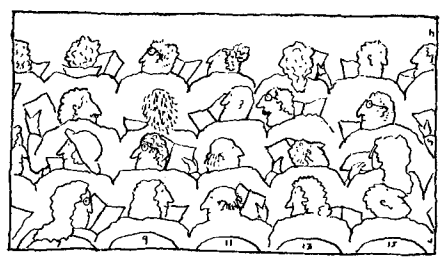
takes away the towel and sits up straight. A single drop of blood falls onto his white trousers; there's blood everywhere—his trousers are splotched and streaked, his hands and cuffs covered, his mustache and the front of the shirt saturated. But it seems to have stopped again now, and Father begins fumbling with the buttons of his shirt. His fingers are shaking violently, however, and after a moment he says, quietly, "Help me with the goddam buttons, Marty." He sighs as he slumps back into the chair.

I am aware, as I bend toward him, my fingers already coated with his blood, that what's going on here is extreme, but my faculty for drawing simple conclusions is numb. A kind of natural selection has occurred: I'm here, in this room, because Father knows that my heart, especially this summer, is a steady pump—it doesn't skip beats, race, pound, sink, or rise to the throat, it only pumps; and Perry has been urged out because Father doesn't want to watch Perry's heart breaking.

After I've got the shirt unbuttoned, he leans forward so that I can help him out of it, and I see that his chest and upper arms are covered with bruises, like dark stains seeping through the skin. He notices the shock on my face and averts his eyes. "How did you get so bruised?" I ask him, but he just begins wiping his stomach with the towel. Soon he hands me the blood-stained towel and smiles, saying, "Thank you, Marty."

"Don't you think we should call the doctor at least?" I ask him.

"Oh, good Lord, no," he says quickly. "That quack is liable to wrap a tourniquet around my neck and choke me to death. Just go down and get me a drink, if you will. And open a window in here, for Christ's sake."



I say, "I think you need a doctor."

"Marty, we'll be home tomorrow," Father says patiently. "I'll go see Dr. Gasser."

In the hallway, I can hear Perry fooling around at the piano in his room. I knock on his door and open it, and when I put my head inside he stops playing and props his elbows on the music desk, looking at me, rather blankly, through the triangle formed by the piano lid at full stick. "What are you doing?" I say.

"Nothing," he says.

"Are you all right?"

"Yeah. How about him?"

"It's stopped," I say. "He wants a drink."

Perry nods.

"*You* weren't much help in there," I say.

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"He wanted me to leave," Perry says.

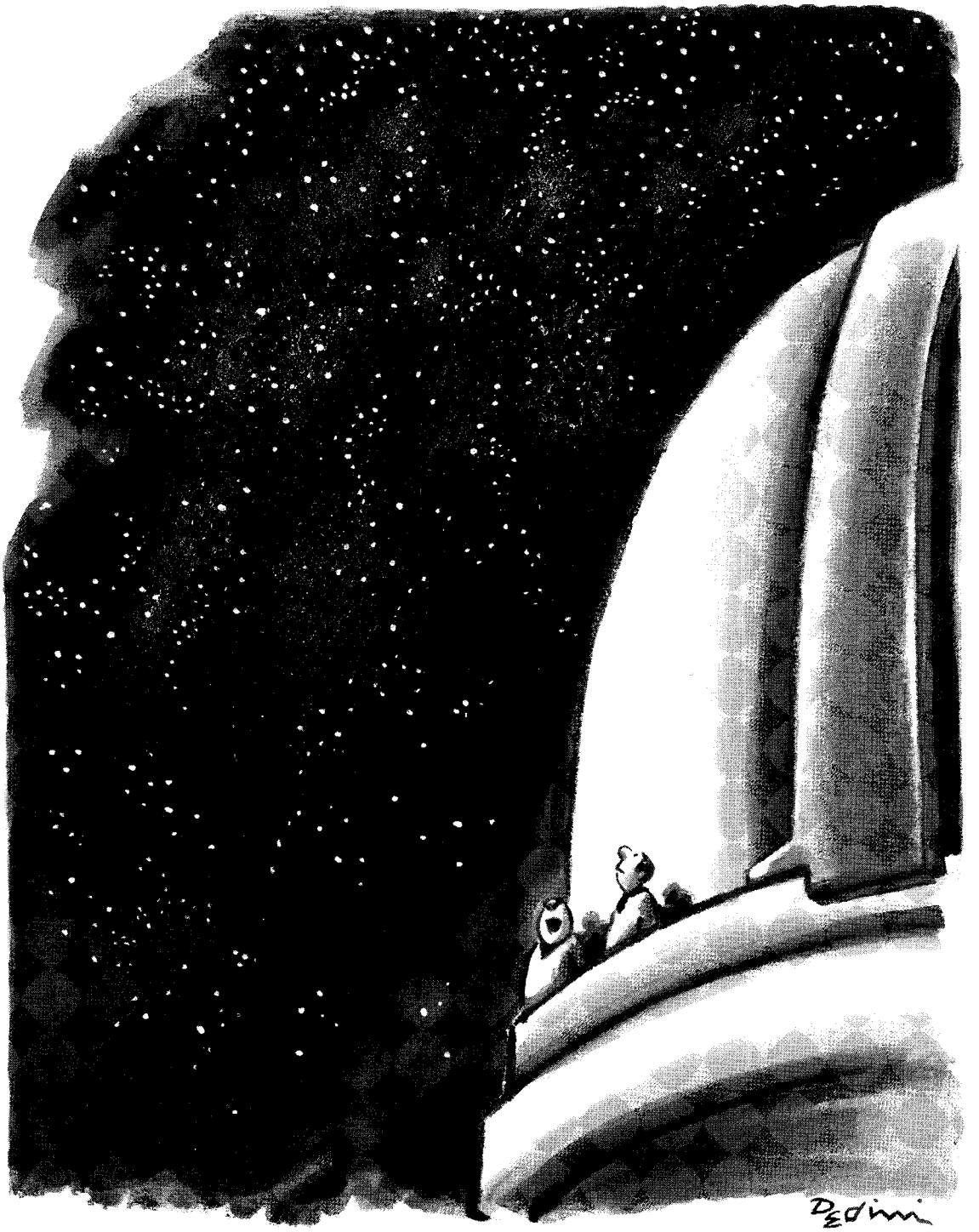
"Yeah," I say, "because you were falling apart."

Perry smiles ironically, then starts to play again.

WE were to see a great deal more of Father's blood before it was over. The enduring image of his dying is one of cheap, B-grade, Hollywood gore. The nosebleeds became frequent and severe. His gums bled, he bled under the skin, he bled regularly from the rectum. Eventually, he was vomiting up fresh blood. Perry and I, off to separate schools in September, were spared much of this, though by Thanksgiving, when we returned home for the holiday, advanced cirrhosis had caused a buildup of ammonia and bilirubin in Father's bloodstream which made him into a man we hardly knew —jaundiced and muddled, invaded and thoroughly colonized by fear.

I took a taxi from the airport when I arrived in Norfolk the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving. It was an unusually warm, overcast night. Besides my cello in its case, I had only one small bag with me, and I decided to get off at the gate to our driveway and walk the hundred yards or so up the sloping lawn. The moonlit blanket of clouds cast a glow over the white clapboard Colonial house, eerie and monumental in the distance. The five great pecan trees, two on one side and three on the other, had lost their leaves, and were in silhouette against the sky. As I walked up the lawn, breathing in a nutty smell in the air, I noticed how few lights were on in the house. As I mounted the porch, I saw a rotting jack-o'-lantern, its carved features black and sagging, sitting near the top of the steps.

Perry, who had arrived a day earlier, met me at the door, pale, his eyes red and puffy. All he said—whispered, actually—was "Welcome to the divine comedy," and made a butler's gesture of entry, bowing and extending one arm in the direction of the library. It was about nine o'clock, and ordinarily at this hour drinking and conversation would have been proceeding in the library—Mother and Father and anyone they might have had over for dinner. But tonight the house is entirely quiet, and dark, with only a single lamp burning inside the library. What



"It makes a four-star restaurant look pretty damn small and insignificant, doesn't it."

• •

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I see from the library door is the back of an easy chair, a table next to it, on which the lamp stands, and a hand, presumably Father's, with fingers wrapped around a drink glass, also on the table. I turn for a moment to Perry, who is right behind me, and he relieves me of my bag and cello and nods, silently urging me forward.

An old man sits in the chair—quite an old man—with yellow skin and drugged, blank eyes. He wears a silly-looking maroon smoking jacket with cuffs and collar of black velvet—something Mother would have ordered for him from one of her catalogues. He gazes into the few inches of air directly in front of his face, sips his drink, and with his other hand clutches at his genitals through his trousers. I lean into his light, so that he can see my face. He says, pleasantly, "We don't use coal anymore to heat the house—you know that. It's too goddam dirty." Then, "Oh, Jesus, Perry, I thought you were Randolph Crane, the old black fellow that used to bring the coal around. Can you imagine that? Caught him eating dog food out of a can one day."

I look at Perry, who stands in the shadows behind Father's chair, but he only holds my gaze for a second, then turns and walks away, to the door, where he leans against the jamb. "Father—" I begin, but Father holds up a hand to silence me and says, "All that gold and all that care—caught him eating dog food out of a can. Longer already have I baked my feet and been planted upside down."

I look again in Perry's direction. "Dante," he says quietly. "Mixed with a little memory. He's been at it all evening."

"Where's Mother?" I ask him, but Father answers, "Upstairs, upstairs, trussing the Thanksgiving—"

His eyes suddenly change, no longer blank but alert, human. He looks at me with recognition, places the drink glass on the table, and gets to his feet, and I see perfect terror in his eyes the instant before he throws his arms around me and whispers my name.

MOTHER *is* upstairs, in her bedroom, but of course she's not trussing any Thanksgiving turkey. She's at her desk, clipping something out of the *Ledger-Star*. When she stands to hug me, her voice is a bit too shrill, and she nearly stabs me in the shoulder with the scissors.

"Yikes," I say, holding her away from me and carefully removing the scissors from her hand; I ease her back into her desk chair.

"I *wondered* when you were going to show up, Marty," she says, cheerfully, but not quite cloaking the accusation.

"I'm here exactly when I said I'd be here, Mother," I say.

"Oh," she says, surprised, lifting her drink glass from the desk; the plastic coaster, a bright turquoise disk with a deep-sea-fishing scene painted on it, sticks to the bottom of the glass, then falls noisily to the desk top.

"I'm really glad you're here, Marty," she says, and she smiles, warming up a bit. "Because Perry's been acting very blue." She takes back the scissors and resumes her clipping. "I've just been reading the sickest story here, Marty," she says. "About a woman who meant to only kill herself but ended up killing her whole family. You wouldn't believe."

Mother's room is something like a stage set—it's too far from one piece of furniture to the next. And everything in sight is covered with a different floral print. The proportions and the jumble of prints make the room seem dead and alive at the same time, also masculine and feminine.

"Mother," I say after a moment, "how long has Father been like that?"

"Like what?" she says, turning to look up at me, her eyes overly wide.

"You know," I say. "Like a corpse."

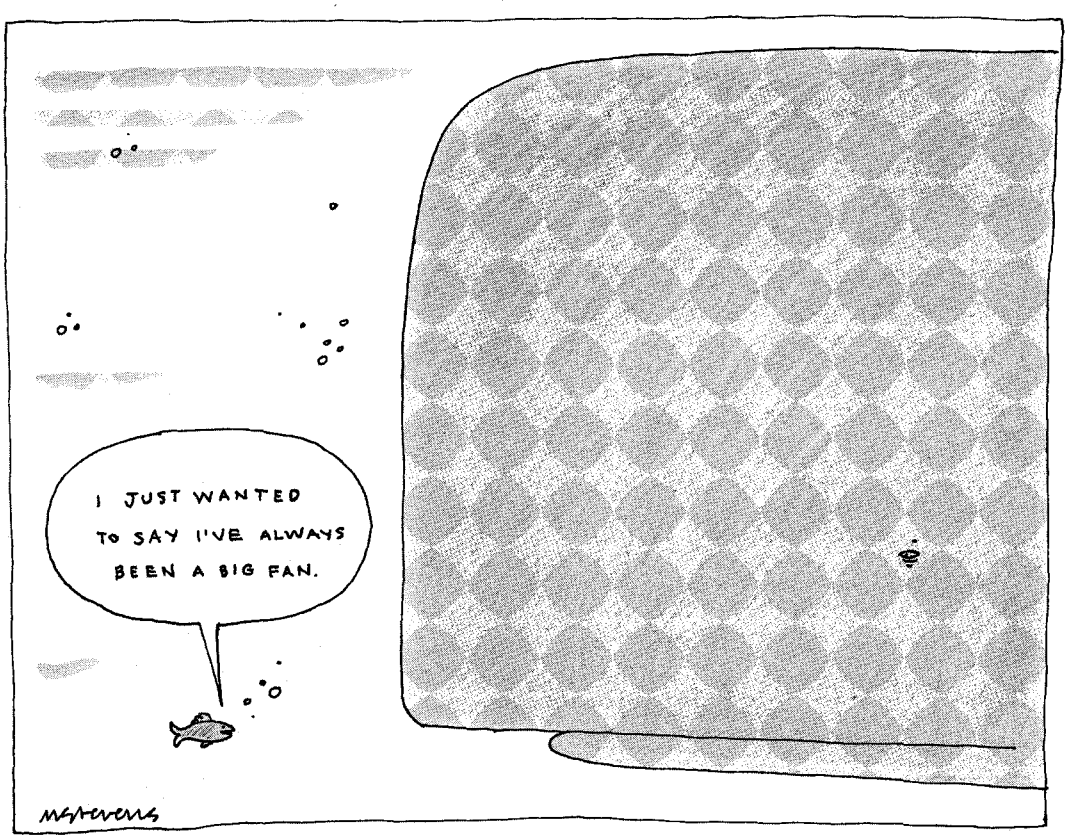
"Oh, that," she says. "Years."

"I'm serious, Mother," I say. "He's down there muttering nonsense, he looks half dead, and—"

"Martin," she interrupts. "Your father is intoxicated. You know he's never drunk very well." She puts down the scissors and takes a gulp from the glass, as if to prove how well *she* does it.

"I know he's intoxicated," I say. "You're intoxicated, too. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the fact that he looks like a seventy-year-old man. Have you looked at him lately?"

"No," she says. "I



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haven't. Not up close."

"Well, he looks like a seventy-year-old man," I say. "He looks half dead."

"*Perry*," Mother says broadly as Perry enters the room. "Look who's here."

"I know," says Perry.

"Perry's been very blue," Mother says to me.

"What is she—crazy in addition to being drunk?" I say to Perry.

"What's wrong, Mother?" Perry says.

"I'm sure I don't know," says Mother, and she suddenly seems even drunker than I had thought. "Martin seems upset by your father's drinking. After twenty years. *Finalement*."

"Will you tell her what he looks like?" I say to Perry.

"She knows what he looks like," says Perry.

"Well, I don't understand what's going on here," I say.

"The doctor comes every day, Marty," Perry says. "He says the same thing: Pop's got to stop drinking. But he doesn't stop."

"But what's wrong with him?" I say.

"It's his liver," Perry says.

"Why don't you make him stop drinking?" I ask Mother.

"*Me*?" she says. "*Me* make him stop drinking? That's a laugh."

"But you've got to," I say. "He's your husband."

"Oh, Martin, really," she says. "I'm the *last* person to make Rudy stop drinking."

"But you have to," I say. "We can't make him stop when we're away at school. You're the only one who can do it."

"The only thing I ever made your father stop doing was giving those God-damned concerts," she says.

In the abrupt silence that follows this remark, she quickly reaches for her drink glass, seeing that she's slipped in some way. "Well, it doesn't matter," she says. "No one can make Rudy stop drinking, and that's that." She gives me an exasperated look, puffs out both cheeks, and expels her breath. She rises, unsteadily, from the desk chair, walks the considerable distance to her dressing table, and finds a hairbrush. She turns and looks at me again, this time angry. "What is it exactly you think I should do, Martin? Lock him in his room?"

"What do you mean, you made him stop giving concerts?" Perry says. He says it very slowly, so that it sounds like a threat.

Mother laughs, incredulous. "I don't know what the two of you think you're doing here," she says. "This is not exactly my idea of a good time, you know. Having my children come home for Thanksgiving only to attack me in my own bedroom. Now I feel very tired. I can't imagine why."

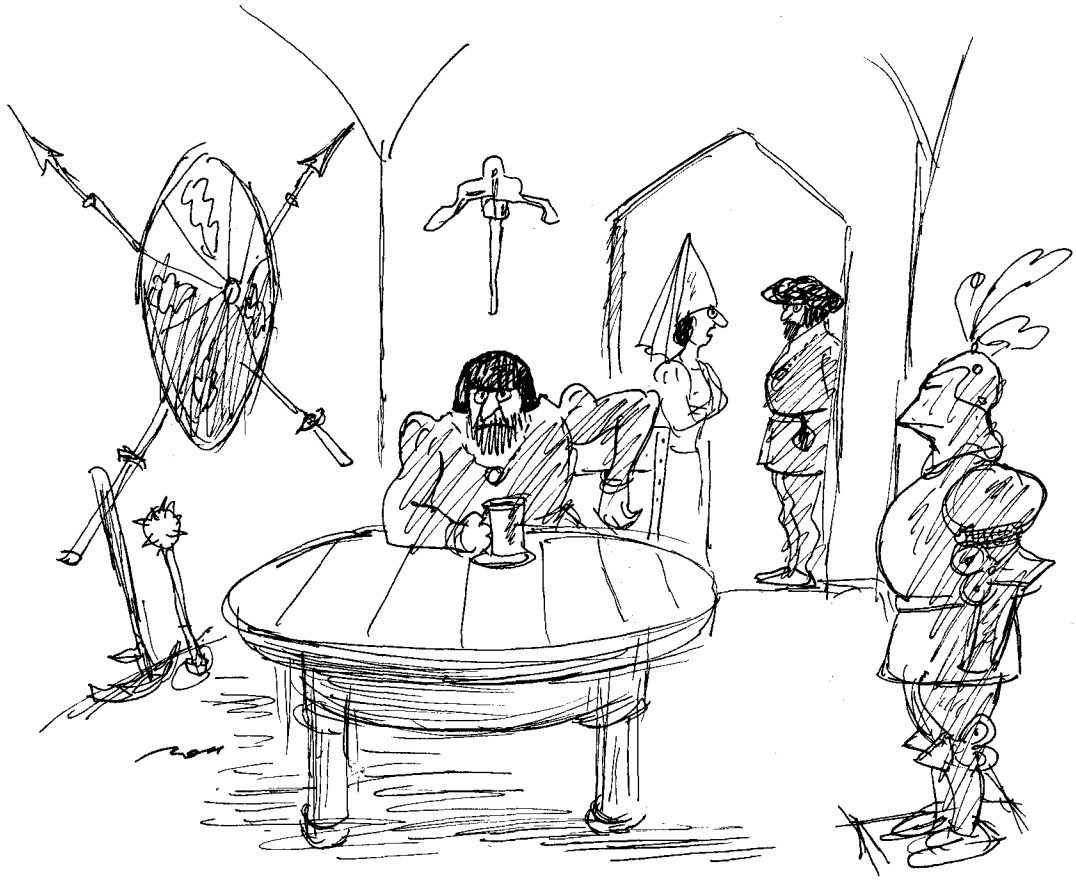
She moves back to the desk, where she adds vodka to her glass from a nearby bottle, then drinks. This is about as unceremonious as it gets, just short of drinking straight from the bottle. Perry turns to leave. As he reaches the door, Mother calls to his back, "What do *you* know? You were only a child. It was an embarrassment. A man of thirty-four making his début! Why, a seventeen-year-old girl outplayed him on that same stage the week before. You didn't have to endure all those sympathetic looks from people. What do *you* know?"

For a brief moment, Perry shows her a face thoroughly absent of expression—an exterminator's face—then quickly leaves the room.

I'm a bit stunned—it's as if some detail has been erased from a complicated drawing, and suddenly the picture makes new sense. I even think that's what Perry's parting look meant: Erase Mother from the picture, rub her out, and all at once we can see Father a happy man.

Of course we are wrong. The picture makes new sense, but it doesn't show a happy man.

"It's been quite a spectacle," Mother says to me, pitiful now, almost slurring—something she never does—as if any surge of emotion she might have felt (regret, loss, fear?) has only pushed her further into drunkenness. ". . . should've been here," she says. "The *two* of you should've been here. . . . These last months. Ray-



"Chivalry has been dead for years, but he's still taking it pretty hard."

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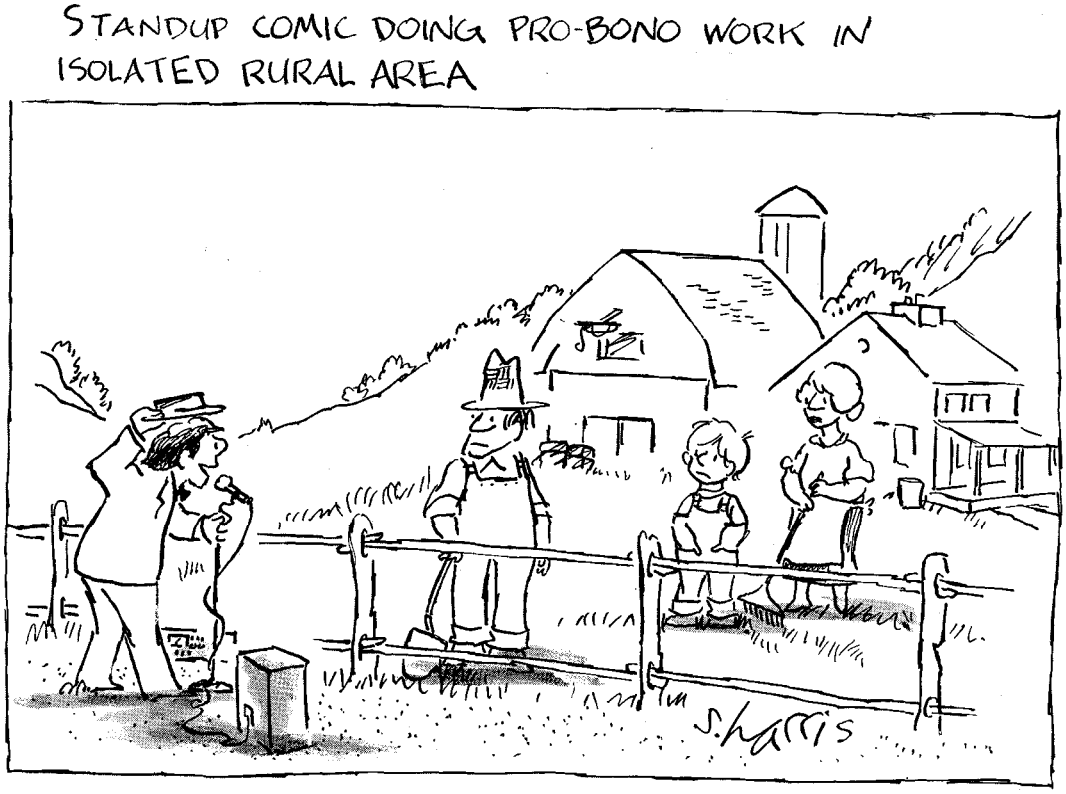

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mond's been spending half his time mopping blood. It's been quite a party. Like something out of a fucking horror movie. Don't you see, Martin? Your father is killing himself. And he wants us all to watch."

"He wants *you* to watch," I say. "I'm just an innocent bystander."

She turns her back to me for a moment in order to exchange the hairbrush she's been holding for a cigarette. When she speaks next, she's a tough Las Vegas girl, up late and with no time for greenhorns. "You know perfectly well, darling," she says, "that there's no such thing."

BUT maybe she did wake up feeling something the next day—some resolve pushing through the hangover. Maybe we were all three frightened by what happened that night in Mother's bedroom—maybe we ventured incautiously too near some partial truth, close enough to have caught a glimpse of consequences—and the next day, Thanksgiving, we were all wonderfully gentle, as if we meant to heal each other. And we found that the safest way of doing this, the most comfortably indirect, was to focus on Father. We colluded in a conspiracy of kindness toward Father. I decided that he didn't really look so bad after all —not nearly as bad as I'd thought the night before. He seemed to have his wits about him again, as much as he ever did lately. He wasn't quoting any Dante at breakfast. Midafternoon, when we all gathered in the dining room for the Thanksgiving feast prepared by Raymond, Father was sober and energetic. No wine was served with the meal—a breach of custom that could only have been engineered by Father—and no one mentioned it. Mother fetched her drinks discreetly from the kitchen, and discreetly she drank vodka from a water glass with no ice.

After dinner, in the music room, Perry and I faked our way through part of the Chopin cello sonata. At the piano, Perry sang the notes he couldn't get to, blah-blah-blahed embellishments, and we laughed through many passages, wagging our heads and making saucer eyes. It was meant only as fun, but Father regarded the performance, as he did the music, reverently. Long after we had quit, he remained in that elevated place to which romantics are so often carried by Romantic music, that place where they seem to be deeply inhaling some fragrance—eyelids shut, head tilted back. He must have been extra vulnerable to suggestion in that state, for when Mother whispered in his ear he was up and on his feet; his hand at the small of her back, he escorted her to the curve of the piano. He took a seat at the keyboard, and before Perry and I could quite believe our eyes, Mother was warbling—sweetly, girlishly—"Most gentlemen don't like love, they just like to kick it around." We were as reverent at this intended fun as Father had been at mine and Perry's a minute earlier. He prompted Mother jovially when she forgot the lyrics, and as they laughed and he played and she sang, the room darkened—a cloud enveloped the sun outside. The silk tiger lilies on the back lid of the piano quaked in their Japanese urn. The old grandfather clock in the foyer chimed one, two, three, four, five. When Father began the introduction to "Embraceable You," Mother faltered a bit—she had a moment of serious doubt. They looked at one another. She seemed to say, "Can we really do this?," and he seemed to say, "I dare you." She started out self-consciously, but before the song was over she was singing it to him. Perry, too moved or too amazed, left the room. But he returned in another minute and stood in the doorway, because Father, who was, I suppose, irreligious, had one more idea, one more surprise: at the end of the Gershwin, he began to sing unaccompanied, "In the bleak midwinter . . . ," and Mother at first laughed, saying, "Oh, Rudy, it's not Christmas *yet*," but then quickly abandoned the curve of the piano to stand behind him, her hands on his shoulders, his head fitting nicely between her breasts. "Frosty wind made moan," he sang. "Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone; snow had fallen, snow on snow. . . ." Father didn't have much of a voice, and he didn't finish the carol, because singing it took him too far away to see it through.

Perry escaped the music room again. When I think of these last days with

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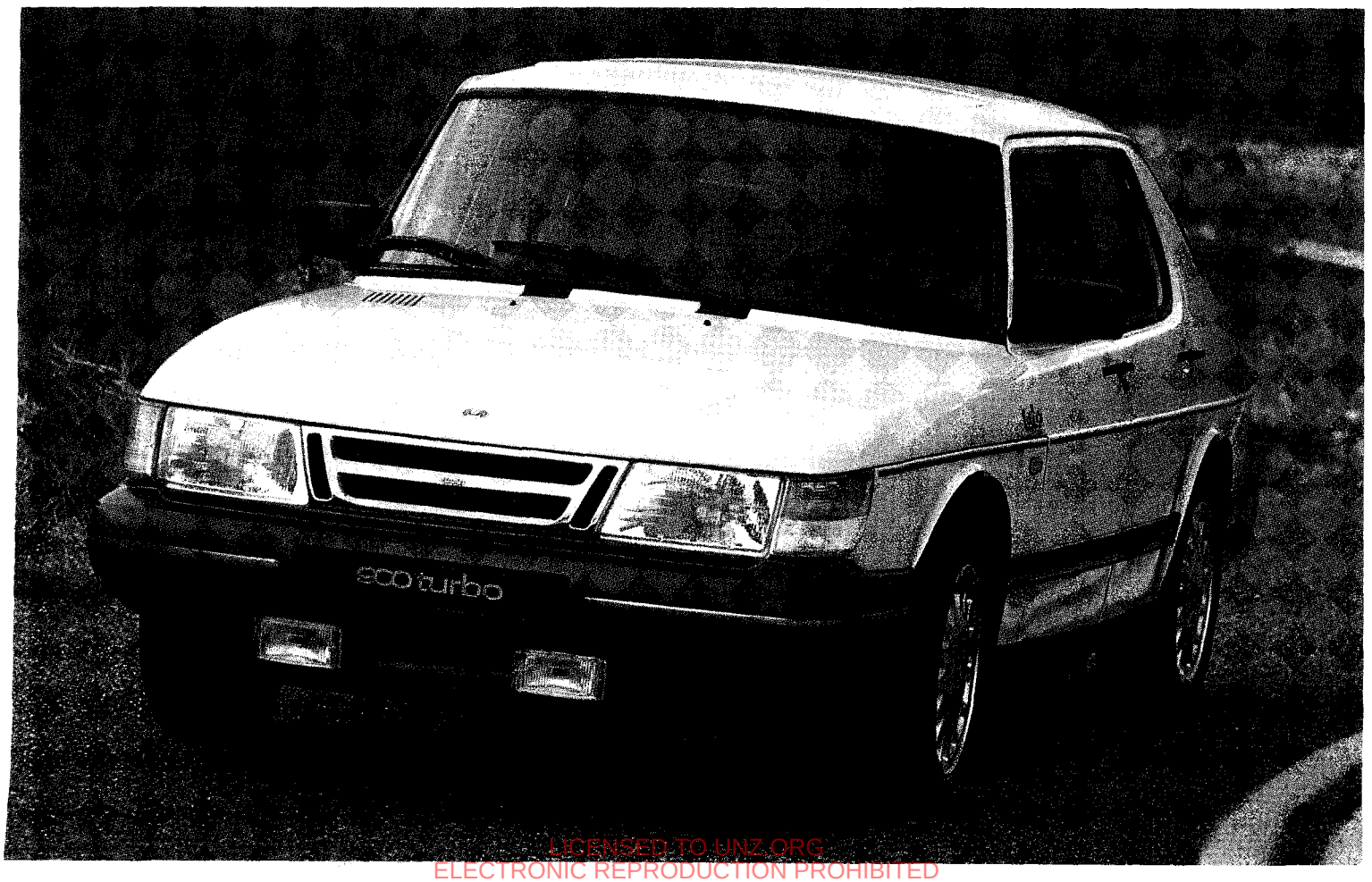

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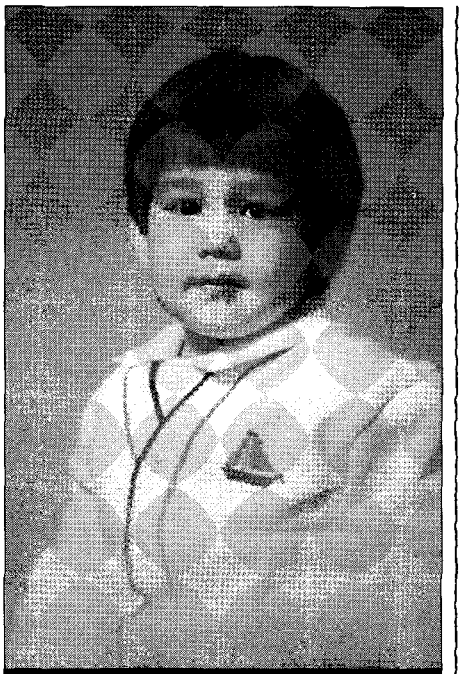

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Father, when I think of this last Thanksgiving, what I recall of Perry is his leaving rooms, or lingering in doorways, about to leave. His standing on thresholds, unable quite to stay, unable quite to go.

WE buried Father in Grace Cemetery eight days later. Perry and I had both returned to school on Sunday after the holiday, but Mother called us back home early Monday. Father was in the hospital, comatose. She called Max Dolotov, too—she felt that Father's closest friend should be present, even though Dolotov was not really a close friend. Father had no close friends. Unless you counted me and Perry, especially Perry. Dolotov arrived on Tuesday and stayed with us at the house. Father died Wednesday morning, around nine-thirty, never having regained consciousness. We got this news by telephone. Father's doctor, Dr. Gasser, had urged us all the night before to go on home and get some rest; the chances of anything changing overnight were slim. The news was received quietly—most quietly by Dolotov, who went back to sleep. Mother summoned us into her bedroom. In her pink dressing gown with pink ostrich feathers on the sleeves, she hugged us and said she wanted us to know that Father had been a wonderful man, had always taken good care of her, had always taken good care of all of us; he may not ever have made a career for himself, or even held a job, for that matter—you couldn't point to him and say, My father, the great scientist or businessman—but he had had character and goodness, and wasn't that important, wasn't that a kind of greatness all its own? Then she took a long bath in preparation for going to the hospital.

I felt very close to Perry that morning. I seemed unable to let him out of my sight. We went from room to room together, and said things to each other like "Do you want to sit in the library for a while?" and "Do you want something to eat?" We found Raymond in the butler's pantry, at the utility basin, hand-washing stains out of Dolotov's underwear. He said that Dolotov had given him a half-dozen pairs of boxer shorts—apparently Dolotov had brought his dirty laundry to Norfolk—and told him to scrub them by hand, with bleach. Perry collected the wet underwear in a dishpan, I stuffed the rest into a plastic trash bag, and we carried it out to the garage and dumped it into a garbage barrel. When we returned we found Raymond sitting on the floor of the pantry, his back against a cabinet, his forearms resting on his knees, crying. "*I* loved him, too," he said to us, and we said we knew he did, though we both were surprised by Raymond's dilemma: we hadn't known that loving Father, and especially confessing it, meant, for Raymond, crossing the barrier of his salary, that it meant overstepping his "place," that it was a right he had to claim as an insurgent—how could we have known? We attempted to comfort him, tried to get him to sit on a stool in the kitchen while we made him some tea. But it soon became clear that the best way we could comfort him was to give him something comforting to do. So *he* made the tea, and we sat on stools. And it was with Raymond that we began to be able to talk about Father. We sat around the old wooden refectory table in the kitchen drinking tea and talking about Father. Raymond smoked his Kools, striking matches on the sole of his shoe. He showed us the inscription on the back of his watch, a gold Rolex that Father had given him one year for Christmas: two words—"Long Life." Most of what we said was sentimental and wouldn't have interested anyone but us. Stories about Father were quiet, domestic stories, set indoors. They didn't find him exploring his virility in the high elk country, or contemplative, in waders, in the middle of wilderness streams; they found him writing hundred-dollar checks for the mailman so the mailman might have the plaguing warts removed from his elbow; they found him buying the bad still-life of a local artist, or wearing the ridiculous string tie given him by a neighbor. The only extraordinary reports about Father weren't stories at all, because they had so little individual shape: they were momentary sketches that began, only in collection, stratified, to form the portrait of a man—an addict—who loved his children.

—DENNIS MCFARLAND

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Unlike my sentences, the elements put together by we admissions officers are like bricks, essentially fixed units we can either select or reject but never alter.—*James Laveck in the Cornell Alumni News.*

Sentence rejected.

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THE SPORTING SCENE

NO, BUT I SAW THE GAME

BASEBALL movies make baseball fans feel good for the wrong reasons. Watching actors taking their Aunt Hattie cuts at the plate, turning the twelve-second double play (was that slo-mo, or what?), or striking out the side with high-parabola fastballs, we smile unpleasantly in the dark, smug in the knowledge that our sport and its practitioners are beyond imitation. This tingle of superiority isn't particularly satisfying, since we fans of the game are there in another capacity, as moviegoers; more than anyone else in the audience, we want the baseball on the screen to work, to sweep us up and make us care about the story, so we can forget how badly these guys on the screen play ball. Sometimes that happens, but more often we can feel the old Susp.-of-Disb. gears creaking and groaning inside, particularly during baseball movies in which the plot depends heavily on stuff that happens on the field. Real baseball drama takes its time, as we know, and its thrilling or melodramatic resolutions tend to be minor events—a misplayed grounder, a little flare that drops in behind second, a hit-and-run bouncer that finds its way through the created aperture in the infield defense—which feel gigantic or explosive because they release us from a debilitating anxiety. All the accumulating and seemingly eventless previous innings have been crammed with news and notices and gnawing concerns for the fan in the stands. Does our pitcher have his good breaking ball today, and (a few minutes later) what's he *doing* nibbling away at this No. 8 hitter? . . . Why is Straw playing so deep? . . . Why does Davey have Keith guarding the line like that, now that Randy's out there firing? . . . Hey, look at this—there's two up-pitches from Browning, he's beginning to lose it for sure, but let's get him before they can bring in Franco, O.K.? . . . Come on now, you guys. C'mon. . . .

Not much of this is translatable into movie language, of course, since it is silent and lengthily ongoing, and since the focus of our concern—the difference of a foot or two in the placement of the infield defense, or of millimetres in or out as the pitched ball flashes across the plate—is daunting for the cinematographer and invisible to the inexpert moviegoer. Movies have to keep moving, and thus can't wait around for the slow, hourglass slippage of baseball time, in a game or in a summer. Baseball is mostly lowlights, but baseball movies must suggest otherwise, often by edited, closeup snatches of bats meeting balls, gloves gobbling up grounders, spiked feet toeing a base, and so on, or by the opposite distortion—the super-slow-motion shot of the batter waiting and tensing as the ball spins in from the mound with all stitches showing, and then, after a flurry of intercut batter movements and grimaces, operatically soars up and away and, most of the time, into the bleachers. Onscreen baseball action leans toward the grotesque: swinging strikes that miss by a mile; wild pitches that hit the screen on the fly or comically nail some bystander on the noggin; and that game- and series- and movie-winning homer into the upper deck, accompanied by rainbow lights, music up, and fan feelings down. Movie baseball is inexorably entertaining, while real baseball, as every fan knows, is too serious, most of the time, to be fun at all.

Moviemakers have tried to patch over some of the built-in hazards of the genre by including segments of actual game footage in their dramas. This does the job well enough in panorama—packed audiences at Wrigley Field or Yankee Stadium rising and roaring in response to some offscreen event, and then a glimpse of some distant but unmistakably authentic player rounding second and just beating the throw in to third—but documentary closeups often work the other way. "Bang the Drum Slowly," an exemplary (for its time) diamond flick made in 1973, has several authenticating shots of big-leaguers presumably in action against the movie's home team, the New York Mammoths, but when I watched it again on my home-screen video the other day, a sudden vision of Tony Perez swinging massively at an upper-level fastball and then a glimpse of Brooks Robinson batting (and wearing that peculiar helmet of his, with its almost invisible bill) made me forget all about pitcher Henry

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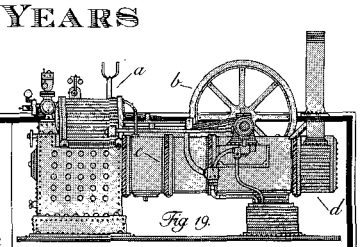


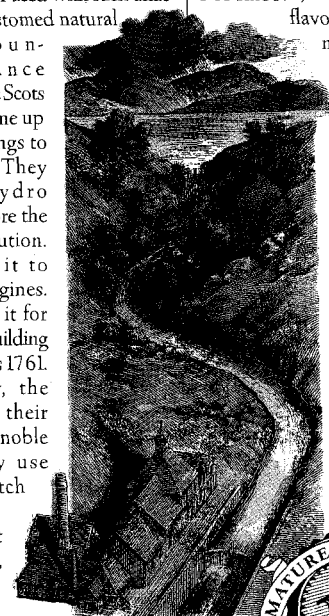
Was the man who invented the steam engine inspired by a whisky still?

It rains a lot in Scotland. Always has. How much? Let's just say you'll never hit a sprinkler head on a Scottish golf course. The Highlands alone get more than twice the rainfall of Seattle. Even more than the Amazon River territory.

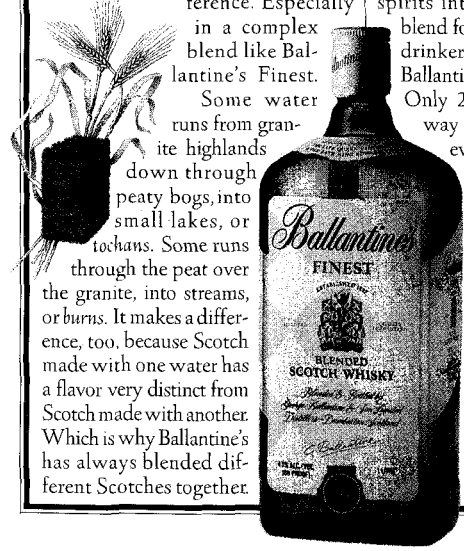
Faced with such unaccustomed natural abundance the Scots came up with lots of things to do with water. They developed hydro power long before the industrial revolution. They boiled it to power steam engines. And they used it for transportation, building canals as early as 1761.

But, chiefly, the Scots dedicate their water to a more noble purpose. They use it to make Scotch whisky.

Of course it also takes peat, barley and yeast to complete the recipe, but Scotch is, after all, a liquid, and the water makes a big difference. Especially in a complex blend like Ballantine's Finest. Some water runs from granite highlands down through peaty bogs, into small lakes, or *lochans*. Some runs through the peat over the granite, into streams, or *burns*. It makes a difference, too, because Scotch made with one water has a flavor very distinct from Scotch made with another. Which is why Ballantine's has always blended different Scotches together.



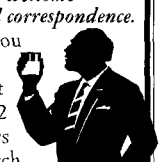
Balblair. A noble contributor to the blend.



For smooth, mellow, yet full-bodied flavor every time, we blend mature single malts from each of the Scottish whisky regions. Some are created by our eight affiliated distilleries. Others are famous names, purchased directly from the source. (However, we bow to their desire to remain anonymous.)

In all, we use forty-two single malts to create our Finest and 12 year old blends. In the case of our noble 12 year old, none is younger than 12 years, although some are much older.

And our rare 17 year old marries an exclusive selection of more mature spirits into a sophisticated, heady blend for the discriminating Scotch drinker. For special occasions, try Ballantine's legendary 30 year old. Only 200 cases a year find their way to the United States. That's even fewer than the number of Rolls Royces imported each year. *We welcome all correspondence.*



Now you may well think that waiting 12 or 17 years for a Scotch is a bit excessive. And 30 years may indeed be daft. But time is on our side. We've nothing better to do. Besides, it's raining outside.

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Wiggen and catcher Bruce Pearson and the pennant hopes of the Mammoths; I stopped the movie, rewound, and watched the real heroes once more, for the thrill of it. This distraction turns up again and again. A 1933 movie, "Elmer the Great," which stars Joe E. Brown as a comical rube phenom, has a riveting black-and-white flash of Lou Gehrig and Tony Lazzeri warming up on the sidelines of Wrigley Field before one of the games of the 1932 Yankees-Cubs World Series. "Field of Dreams," the baseball tearjerker now in the theatres, includes a lovely middle-distance shot of a night game at Fenway Park, but I was snatched away from the view and the story when I noticed that the batter was Ron Hassey, the Oakland catcher, who popped out to short right field; the next time I saw the movie, I got the same little start when I saw that the pitcher working to Hassey was Oil Can Boyd. (A friend of mine, commenting on this unsettling phenomenon in baseball movies, said that it reminded him of reading along in a so-so literary biography and suddenly coming on a quoted passage by the biographee, put there by the author to prove his scholarship but now, alas, serving only to prove which writer was really worth reading.)

Old-time baseball-movie producers used to go further in the authentication dodge by giving real major-leaguers walk-on parts in their baseball epics. Babe Ruth, Bill Dickey, and Mark Koenig play themselves during some Yankee-clubhouse scenes in the wheelhorse "The Pride of the Yankees," which starred Gary Cooper as Lou Gehrig; and Dickey turned up again, along with Jimmy Dykes, in "The Stratton Story," in which Jimmy Stewart, as Monty Stratton, a White Sox pitcher of the nineteen-thirties, loses a leg in a hunting accident but makes it back to the bigs again, thanks to prosthesis and June Allyson. There's a bit of interest in watching Ruth swing at a couple of pitches in "The Pride of the Yankees," even in contrived studio shots, but the kick for us (*My God, there he is! There's the Babe!*) is exactly the same as it must have been for movie audiences back when the picture first appeared, as we hear him talk and watch him sort of act, big as life. Celebrity turns don't do the trick anymore, now that television has made us intimately aware of every athlete's looks and mannerisms and self-assured or mumbly interview style, so I was startled when Pete Vuckovich, the stalwart, recently retired Brewer right-hander, showed up in a new baseball flick, "Major League." He was playing a cameo role as a menacing Yankee slugger named Clu Haywood, but the pinstripes didn't fool me: unshaven face, slitty eyes, Fu Manchu mustache —it was Vuke all right, and for a while there I happily forgot the movie and worried again about his torn rotator cuff and his long struggle to come back and be a great money pitcher, as before. Early in the movie, though, Vuckovich whacked a grand slam against Charlie Sheen, and I was tickled for him. Pitchers love to hit.

THERE have been so many new baseball movies in the past couple of years that it has seemed at times that filmmakers were taking on the form as a kind of penance. Some of the results have been pretty good, or partly good, and some god-awful; one of the movies is just about perfect, to my way of thinking. (It's "Bull Durham," which offers almost the first evidence that the phrase "baseball movie" is not an oxymoron.) As must be clear by now, I put in a lot of time this spring and early summer catching up on the new stuff in the theatres and also hunting down oldies in the video stores and playing them at home. My purpose, I hope, was something more than snickering about movie baseball. I am a fan of both of the celebrated indigenous art forms, and I wanted to try to figure out for myself why they have had such a famously hard time getting together. It also occurred to me that by thinking about the most popular of the recent offerings I might have a fresh notion of what it is that American audiences look for or long for in the sport—catch a glimpse of our baseball unconscious, so to speak, which may affect the game and its future in ways we don't always understand. More than once, I was tempted to abandon this lightsome task, because the glaring technical drawbacks—the flubs and misplays I have just mentioned—seemed to be telling me to leave the two national pastimes alone, safely tucked away in separate quarters in my head. I hung in there, though, persisting even after I unexpectedly remembered "The Bob Lemon Story"—no, no: a Bob Lemon story—about his own very brief career in the movies. Call it a parable. Lemon, then the incumbent Yankee manager, was talking in the home dugout one night before a game up at the Stadium, back in the early nineteen-eighties, when somebody asked him about the time he'd been hired to do a little stand-in pitching for Ronald Reagan. The movie was a sub-epochal film bio called "The Winning Team," in which Reagan played Grover Cleveland Alexander, the alcoholic but justly acclaimed Hall of Fame pitcher, who won three hundred and seventy-three games over the course of a twenty-year career in the National League. It was shot back in the early nineteen-fifties, when Lemon himself was at the peak of his form as a right-handed starter in the awesome Feller-Wynn-Lemon-Garcia rotation of the Cleveland Indians; he was, in fact, hurrying to Cooperstown himself (he knocked off a hundred and eighty-six victories during one nine-year stretch in here), and it could be argued that he was more famous at the moment than the star he briefly replaced. He told us he had been called out to Hollywood to add verisimilitude to a few Reagan-for-Alexander pitching sequences—in particular, for an early scene in which the budding immortal, then a gangling Nebraska farm boy, learns control by throwing again and again at a catcher's mitt he has nailed up on a barn door. As Lem recalled it, he was nervous about being asked to perform on cue before the customary assemblage of floodlights and cameras and grips and studio technicians, but he went at it bravely. "My first pitch was a strike," he said. "It hit the side of the pocket, just up on the thumb a dab. I was at the full distance, so I thought it was a hell of a pitch, but then the man in charge—the director or whoever the hell it was—goes 'Cut! Cut! Hold it!' and he comes over and

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tells me I've got to hit the *middle* of the pocket with the pitch. He told me to wake up and do better, and they started the cameras again—they were shooting sort of from behind, so you couldn't tell it was me pitching—but of course I just got worse after that." The takes and retakes went on, and in the end the movie people said, well, they guessed they could piece something together out of it all, but the whole thing was a disaster. At one point, the unit director lost his temper with Lemon and barked, "I thought you guys were professionals!"

I DIDN'T get to "The Winning Team" in my recent swing around the flick-leagues, but dim recollection tells me that it included a few songs by Doris Day, conveniently cast as Alexander's wife; the movie omitted his epilepsy, and attributed his boozing bouts to dizziness (Reagan frowning and shaking his head on the mound) brought on by a prior beaning. I also skipped a good many other baseball bios and dramas of the forties and fifties, including "The Babe Ruth Story" (William Bendix as a bumbling, cleaned-up Bambino), "Fear Strikes Out" (Tony Perkins, in a warmup for "Psycho," playing Jimmy Piersall), "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" (Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra as hoofers in spiked shoes), "The Pride of St. Louis" (Dan Dailey as Dizzy Dean), "It Happens Every Spring" (Ray Milland as a nutty perfesser who invents a substance that causes pitched balls to dodge bats), "The Kid from Left Field" (never saw it), "Rhubarb" (a cat inherits a major-league team), "Angels in the Outfield" (seraphic tamperings liven up a pennant race), and "Damn Yankees" (the dandy musical, with Ray Walston wearing red socks because he's the Devil). I have more recent and more cheerful memories of "The Bad News Bears," in which Walter Matthau winced and groaned as the manager of a hapless Little League team, and of "The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings," about a team of black barnstormers, but I didn't check them out again. Nor did I find time to look up some movies I recall as including some lively little baseball sidebars in the middle of the story: Clark Gable, down from the skies in "Test Pilot," taking Myrna Loy (here a Kansas farm girl) to a

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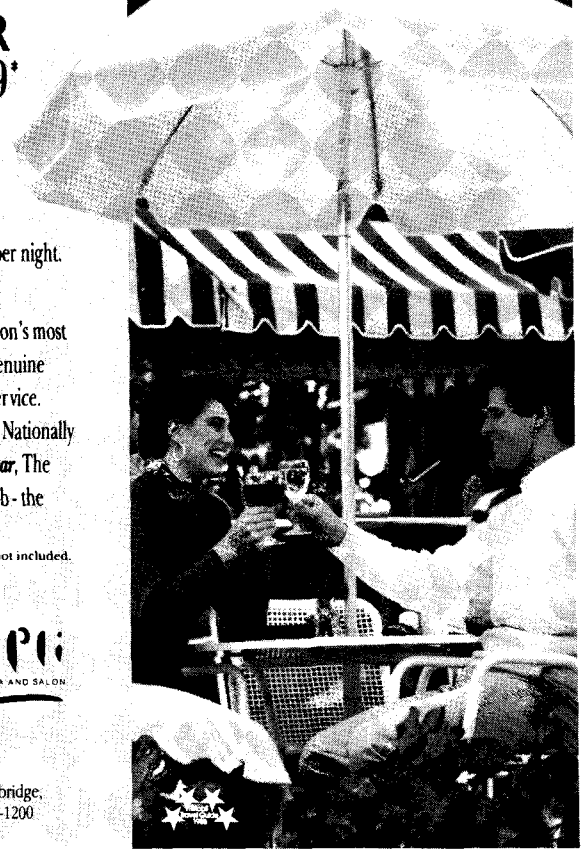

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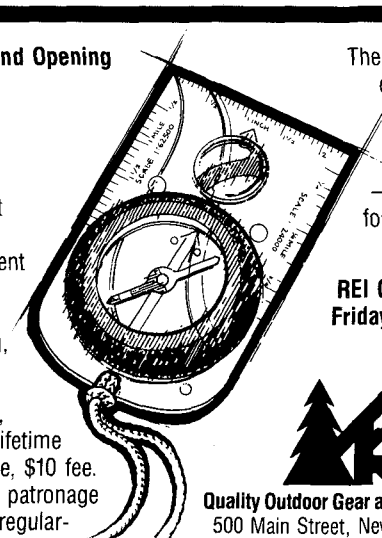

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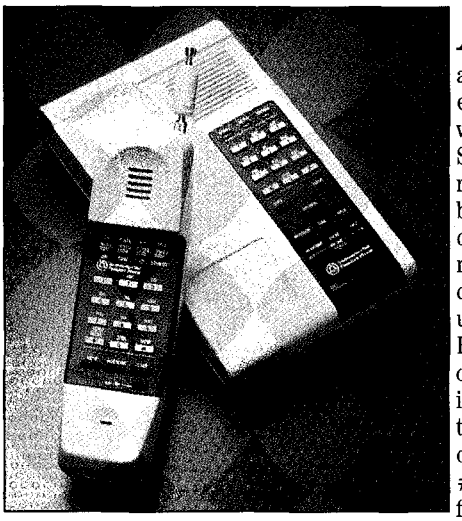

A leading consumer magazine article likens a person's first conversation while walking around talking on a cordless telephone to the exhilaration of that first bike ride minus training wheels. In the magazine's 1988 Buying Guide, the Southwestern Bell FF-1700 Cordless Phone is still rated tops for range in controlled tests among 21 brands and models. By handling incoming and outgoing calls to a range of 1000′ (the article rated a maximum of 1500 ft.), with outstanding speech quality and convenience features, the FF-1700 ended up on top of the consumer magazine ratings reports. Base unit serves as freestanding speakerphone with dialpad, so you get two phones in one. Plus intercom, paging and 10-channel selection. Digital security code protects line from outside access. **$179.95** #2130. To take your freedom a step further, Southwestern Bell's FA-450 Telephone Answering Machine gives you the latest technology and newest features at a most attractive price. Single-cassette operation, call screening, household memo function, voice-activated record, one-touch playback. Two-way record for messages or conversations. Beeperless remote lets you retrieve messages from any push-button phone, also allows remote announcement changes. These Freedom Phones connect you in without tying you down. **$99.95** #2140. Both in beige.

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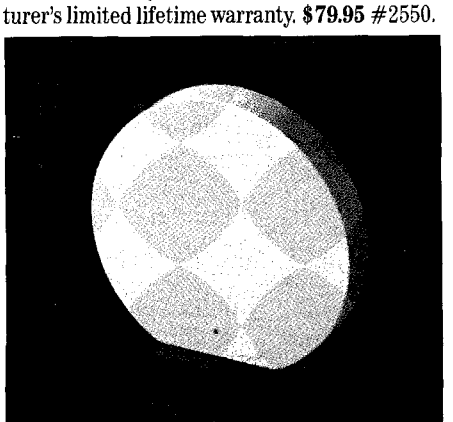

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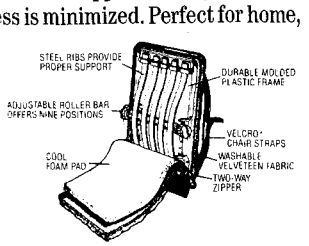

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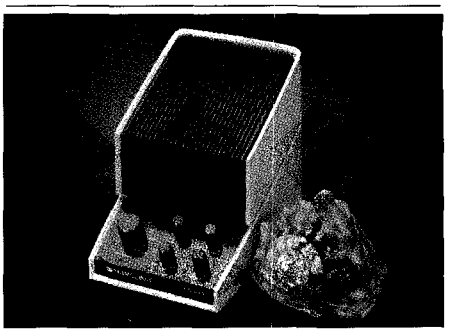

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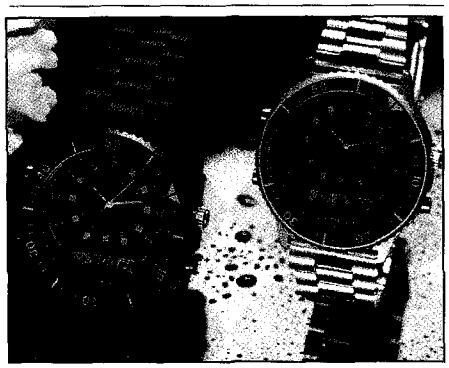

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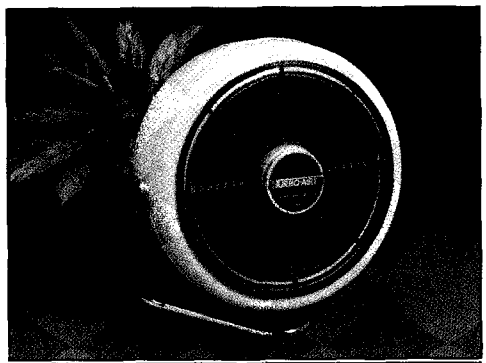

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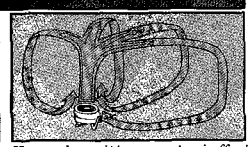

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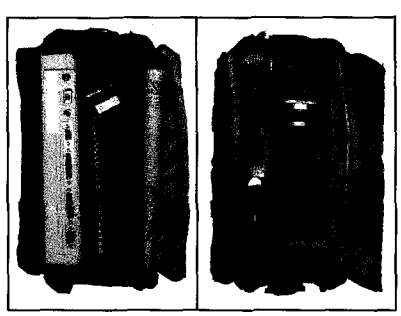

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game in Wichita; Spencer Tracy as a sportswriter bringing his political-pundit girlfriend, Katharine Hepburn, into the press box at Yankee Stadium in "Woman of the Year." There are probably more of these, but I couldn't think of them, perhaps because I was still in trembling remission from my revisit with "The Pride of the Yankees."

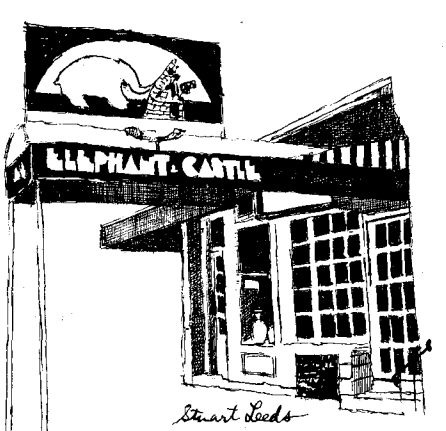
It's my theory that a good many senior baseball people—coaches and managers and writers, and front-office people in particular—never got over "The Pride of the Yankees," a major Hollywood effort that parlayed a strong original news peg (Lou Gehrig's courage in the face of his fatal illness, which struck him down at the age of thirty-seven) into an all-purpose foldout valentine to filial duty, faithful marriage, uncomplaining loyalty to the boss, the rewards of athletic persistence, and the efficacy of good deeds for shut-ins. Its producer, Sam Goldwyn (the director was Sam Wood), was never one to stint on high-cholesterol family values, but we should also remind ourselves that the movie came out in 1942, when Hollywood had just begun fighting a war. The opening dedication presents the movie as the "story of a hero of the peaceful paths of everyday life" who "faced death with that same valor and fortitude that has been displayed by thousands of young Americans on far-flung fields of battle." It's a recruiting poster, then, and perhaps also a warning that we shouldn't complain when bad things happen to nice guys.

The persistent joke about "The Pride of the Yankees" has been that its star, Gary Cooper, who plays Gehrig, couldn't run or throw or bat at *all*, and that Goldwyn, having failed in his plan to convert Cooper to a southpaw (Gehrig was left all the way), had to outfit him with a uniform with a reversed Yankee logo and No. 4 (and reversed pinstripes, too, I guess), and then flipped the negative in the developing room. Nothing helped, and subsequent viewings only reawaken the embarrassment we felt back then when we saw Gary Cooper (as much a hero to us, of course, as Lou Gehrig) doing something awkward on the screen for the very first time—except for trying to act, I mean. But there was something palpably wrong about this reflexive one-star-for-another setup, which seemed to degrade Lou Gehrig a little, even in the stagey, overlit movie footage. Gehrig was immensely strong, and he left a strong impression on anyone who ever saw him play. He was thick-legged and heavyset, with sloping shoulders; he had dimples, which showed up startlingly in black-and-white closeups of his rounded, unemotional face; and he waggled the top of his bat around in a brief circle before taking that great smooth swing—nothing at all like the cowboyish, lank-handed, nose-rubbing, gawky-sweet Cooper. I was a wise-guy college senior when "The Pride of the Yankees" came out, and I certainly didn't have much of this clear in my head, but I can recall the way my friends and I went around making fun of its heartwarming family scenes, imitating the German-immigrant Mom Gehrig as she rebuked Lou, as a lad, after he defied her no-ballplaying rule and, natch, busted a grocery-store window ("It isn't chust the money—it's the time you vaste") and the moment when she learned that he hasn't been studying engineering at Harvard but playing minor-league ball at *Hartford* ("Lou—to giff up everyting ve had planned! For vat? Baseballers are güt-for-nutting!"). But she forgiffs him:

LOU: Are you still my best gal, Mom?
MOM: Always.

(Pop Gehrig, I should add, was on Lou's side. He was played by Ludwig Stossel, who would shortly take his own useful Bierstube accent into "Casablanca" and its immortal "What watch?". . . "Such much?" lines.) I'm afraid we also made fun of the big scene near the end of the movie when Lou gets the very bad news from the medics at the Scripps Clinic: "I'm a man who likes to know his batting average. Is it three strikes, Doc?"

I had hoped that the passage of almost fifty years might have made me



a kindlier fellow, but on my latest go-round the mawkishness of "The Pride of the Yankees" seemed even more difficult to endure—particularly in its depiction of the affectionate but apparently eventless married life of the Iron Horse and his missus (Teresa Wright), which lingers over footage of Eleanor G. pasting up Lou's clipbooks, to the strains of Irving Berlin's "Always," with Lou (I'm eliding a bit here) suddenly exclaiming, "Holy mackerel—I'll miss *batting practice!*" Well, even Noël Coward might have had a hard time sustaining dialogue over a span of two thousand one hundred and thirty consecutive games. Dan Duryea plays a cynical newspaperman, who says of Gehrig, "A guy like that is a detriment to any sport" (how or why is never quite explained), to which Walter Brennan, the good-guy scribe, responds, "Let me tell you about heroes. . . . Lou Gehrig is a guy who does his job." Nothing doing, no edge anywhere, then, until the sad and sudden end. There's a nice shot of Cooper coming onto the field for the farewell tribute, with the sunlight moving up from his feet to cover his entire body as he emerges from the dark tunnel, and the picture ends with the "Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth" speech, complete with the Stadium echoes—the best thing in it, but a pale patch on that famous newsreel shot of the great man at his greatest moment.

Watching "The Pride of the Yankees" again, I found myself trying to forgive its excesses, perhaps because I had heard so many old baseball writers and coaches and executives (by "old" I mean people of my own age) speak of it with great fondness, or perhaps just because it was made so long ago. The latter impulse, I suspect, should be rejected. The movie presents a baseball world (and a human world) that never existed, and Hollywood in 1942 was in fact at the apex of the big-studio era, and had almost unlimited capabilities for muscle, sophistication, and intelligence. "Ninotchka," "The Maltese Falcon," "The Grapes of Wrath," "The Lady Eve," "The Long Voyage Home," and Goldwyn's own "The Little Foxes"—to name but a few beauties—had all preceded "The Pride of the Yankees" by a year or two or three, and the movie's co-writer, Herman Mankiewicz, came to the job shortly after finishing his script for

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"Citizen Kane." The syrup wasn't innocent, then, but Goldwyn thought nothing better suited a dying hero and poor old baseball, and he had the old Log Cabin poured on by the bucketful.

"BANG THE DRUM SLOWLY" felt fresh and smart and different from its predecessors when it came along in 1973. It was the first one that seemed to be a movie about baseball instead of another baseball movie, a form by then as fixed and familiar as the Mickey Rooney kid musical. The script, by Mark Harris, was based on his own novel (the second volume in a series of four about Henry Wiggen, a fictional big-league southpaw), and it preserved some of the wit and zing of the original. The lore and language in the movie sound convincing and insidy, although in fact they include a good many deft Harris inventions, such as the fish-catching hotel-lobby card game TEGWAR ("the exciting game without any rules"). They have the *flavor* of baseball, which is almost all that matters. There's another dying ballplayer at the center of things—a second-string catcher, Bruce Pearson, played by Robert De Niro—but the movie, despite some damp-hankie moments near the end, is lightly ironic in tone, since it shows how shabbily all the Mammoths treat the dumb clod Bruce when they don't know he's "doomded" (in his words) and how they pull together and briefly pay attention to him (and start to win) when the news about his condition gets out. There's a funny, dark little moment when the manager, Dutch Schnell (Vincent Gardenia), startles Bruce by unexpectedly addressing him during a clubhouse speech: "I know that you know, personally, I never had anything but the greatest respect for you as a human being." The movie was made by a young director, John Hancock, and features young actors (including Michael Moriarty, as Henry Wiggen, and Danny Aiello as the first baseman, Horse) who were allowed to run and throw and bat for themselves in most of the baseball scenes. Moriarty shows a commanding, Seaverlike repose on the mound (he'd done his homework), and his off-field Wiggen is handsome, smart, unruffled, and a little sleek: a winner to the life. De Niro doesn't throw or hit or run very convincingly, but his awkwardness fits into his restrained depiction of a poor schlunk; he never goes for the heartache in the role. The baseball in "Bang the Drum Slowly" was shot mostly at Shea Stadium, which looks great in its pristine, green-walled, pre-DiamondVision, pre-Big Apple Hat youth. The movie feels so young that I wanted to forgive it. On my revisit, much of the indoor plot action seemed stiff and talky, but the story picks up some confidence and style as it goes along. This was the first baseball movie that included action shots and ballpark shots that seemed to be there for their own sakes: a view of the Shea grounds crew rolling out the tarps during a shower, for instance, and then the rain falling on the soaking, beautifully green field. The last baseball in the movie is in slow motion—Bruce Pearson circling helplessly under a foul pop near the plate (he doesn't know where the ball is and he doesn't know where *he* is), and then the first baseman, drifting in from screen left to glove the easy chance as the Mammoths clinch. It gets you (it got me all over again), and you even come out of the movie remembering its little tag line: "It's sad—it makes you want to cry. It's sad—it makes you want to laugh."

I THINK Bernard Malamud had a lot more fun writing "The Natural" than Robert Redford and the director, Barry Levinson, and the scriptwriters, Roger Towne and Phil Dusenberry, had making the movie, five years ago. Malamud had come up with a rousing idea for the novel (it was his first, and came out in 1952), which was to weave together the legends of baseball and the thick, misty tangle of Arthurian fable—chivalry and single combat, blood and betrayal and loss—into a tale about a magically talented country-boy pitcher (later, like Babe Ruth, a mighty slugger) who falls and rises again but succumbs at last to the envious wiles of the unheroic. But "weave" is the wrong word; Malamud was a fan as well as a scholar, and the yellowing sports-page stuff fell into place in the book almost more easily than the Malory. Roy Hobbs, the hero, becomes the young king of baseball (for a while, at least) thanks to Wonderboy, his magical bat—fashioned from a lightning-struck tree but plainly the "Excalibur"-model Louisville Slugger—and the big-league team he plays for is the Knights, whose fortunes are meddled with by the wily Merlinesque sportswriter Max Mercy (in the movie, Robert Duvall). Iris is Roy's Guinevere-Iseult, and she restores him, late in the season, after his old wounds have reopened in battle (sort of like Tristram going on the D.L. after the Palamedes series). The movie's baseball echoes were always clearer. Whammer Wambold is the Babe, of course, and when Bump Bailey, the star outfielder for the Knights, runs into a fence and dies, Roy replaces him in the fans' hearts almost overnight, just like Mickey Mantle taking over center field from Joe DiMaggio. Early on, when Roy is shot in a hotel room by a deranged young woman, fan-readers instantly recalled Eddie Waitkus, the Phillies' first baseman, who suffered the same near-fatal wound at the hands of a psychopathic Baseball Annie back in 1949. The gamblers in the novel and the foul owner, Judge Goodwill Banner, who together try to fix the big game, are wraiths from the Black Sox Series, and so on. Sometimes these invisibly footnoted references in the twin tales felt scholar-strained or showoffy (Pop Fisher, managing the Knights in the wasteland of last place, can't get even a trickle out of the dugout water fountain), but you didn't mind much in the book; you hurried along to the next page. On the screen, however, legends feel heavy, and tend to be underlit and overglown. "The Natural" is plainly about a baseball superhero from the sticks, and I don't think many movie fans cared about most of this, or ever had a clue about why Roy (the knight in banishment) reappears as a much older player to take up his quest, or what the hell the poisoning was all about (Kim Basinger, as the temptress Memo Paris, slips Roy a bad canapé at a party he should have passed up), or what the bleeding wounds and the old-silver-bullet-in-the-gut diagnosis were doing in there, late in a pennant race. Roy's hospital scenes are so murmurous and violet-hued that we think we're in church. Robert Redford, as Roy Hobbs, stalks through all this with a glum rigidity, stunned by meaning and afraid to spit.

The portentous stuffiness of "The Natural" is a shame, because the baseball in it sometimes isn't bad at all, and

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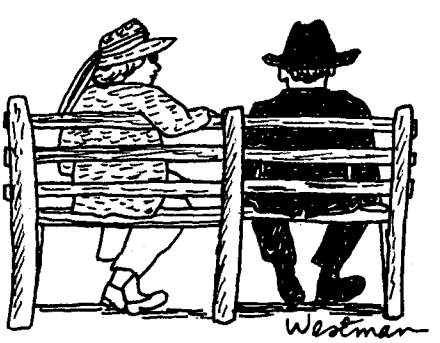
you keep thinking the whole thing is going to take off and take you with it, like a pennant race that suddenly catches fire along about Labor Day. Redford afield is the most convincing ballplayer yet filmed: runs well, throws well, hits with power (he modelled his swing on Ted Williams', I'm told)—you want to sign him up. I enjoyed the nicely sustained scene, early on, when Roy, the rookie pitcher, strikes out Whammer Wambold in an impromptu railroad-siding matchup beside a waiting, huffing steam engine. Joe Don Baker is the Ruthian slugger who calls his shot and then fans, and you almost cheer when Roy, in a lozenge-design sleeveless sweater, fires strike three past him in the golden, buggy country twilight. There's a funny, quick bit later on, when Roy literally knocks the cover off a baseball, and there's comfort in the easy, wide-bottom performances of Wilford Brimley, as Pop, and Richard Farnsworth, as a worn-out, white-haired coach. (I'll bet my old Virgil Trucks autograph ball that stacks of film-school master's theses are already piling up at U.C.L.A. or Columbia tracing the long line of fat roles as movie-baseball managers or coaches or good guys which have brought employment to notable character actors like Frank Morgan, Charles Bickford, Walter Brennan, Paul Douglas, Frank Lovejoy, John Mahoney, and more: "Third Billings in the Stengel Strain," or some such.) The old-timey, steeply tiered, steel-post ballpark—it was the old Buffalo Bisons' stadium—has the proper angles and shadows, and you can sense that some real money and real efforts to get things right went into the movie. Fans I know (and some players as well) still put "The Natural" at the top of their list of movies about the pastime.

My own hopes gathered themselves about midway through the movie (I felt the same way on later viewings), when it suddenly seemed that it had a chance to seize on a legitimate variant of the Arthurian bushwa—something to the effect that extraordinary athletic ability is untouchable and beyond explanation, truly magical, and that when it goes you die. But "The Natural" drops this more often than it picks it up, and gives us easier and dumber chords instead: expiation by true love (Glenn Close, as Iris, appearing in the stands with a heavenly halo of light around her head); redemption by cuteness (Wonderboy splits apart, but Roy accepts a fresh bat fashioned by the fat, smiling batboy); and generational rebirth (Roy and Iris had a son, it suddenly turns out, and we take our leave after a final, sun-filled shot of dad and kid throwing the old pill around in a wheatfield). There was never much chance that "The Natural" could resist stuff like this, given the prior absence of anything like everyday ball and everyday life—any quickness on the base paths or in the dialogue. The last mistake, and the fatal one for all meaning, is that Hobbs-Redford cannot be allowed to fail and fall, as he does in the book (which ends, "He lifted his hands to his face and wept many bitter tears"), since movie heroes, unlike ballplayers, don't *really* get old. Roy, with blood oozing through his pinstripes, wafts the game-winning, pennant-winning homer into the arcs, and circles the bases in slow (very slow) motion as showers of light fall about his golden locks. It's a good thing for him that the game and the season are over; the first pitch of his next at-bat would have been in his ear.

JOHN SAYLES' "Eight Men Out," which came out last year, should be anti-myth—it's based on Eliot Asinof's workmanlike, unsentimental 1963 account of the Black Sox scandal—but sometimes it slips and seems to encourage our unmelting conviction (the old lollipop in the national phiz) that there was something innocent about our American past. Modern baseball scholarship—for example, Charles Alexander's recent "John McGraw," a first-class biography—has made it clear that early big-league ball was commonly accompanied by fisticuffs, the whiff of bribery, the intimidation of umpires, and endemic drunkenness in the stands and on the field, but not much of this message has reached us. I got the feeling that "Eight Men Out" wasn't going to be able to help itself once I saw the opening shot, of some Chicago street kids in knee pants and little cloth caps hanging around Comiskey Park and talking excitedly about their White Sox heroes—the bought-off, degraded stars who would hand over the 1919 Series to the Cincinnati Reds and eventually get themselves thrown out of baseball. We know what's ahead, because the story has to come down to the engraved, Insta-Sob punchline, "Say it ain't so, Joe." By the time the motto and its moment arrive, well along in the picture, we've learned a good deal about the various lunkheaded or aggrieved or gullible or mixed-up White Sox players and their braggart, miserly owner, Charlie Comiskey, and the double-dealing underworld creeps and bullies who helped Arnold Rothstein put in the fix, but the line (it's delivered by a kid in the crowd outside the Cook County Criminal Courts Building, and goes unanswered by Shoeless Joe Jackson, the beclouded nonpareil) empties our heads and swells up our hearts: kids were good back there before the fall,, and so were ballplayers—hell, *America* was good. Sayles tries to be cool and documentary about his material, but the movie colorings and costumes—straw hats and cigars, dark old saloons—and the Chicago-Dixieland background music and the rotogravure groupings lay a waxy, museum-exhibit sheen on the enterprise. It feels educational. Asinof's book was sharper and more intelligently cynical, because he didn't have to mess around with authenticity. But there's a lugubriousness about the Sayles "Eight Men Out" that's hard to account for. It's almost as if we had grown more, instead of less, oppressed by the Black Sox scandal as it recedes in history—as if we wanted to get it back and rewrite it, to see if it won't come out better. (In "Field of Dreams," which we will get around to shortly, this revisionism floats down from Heaven, and is played out by ghosts.) "Elmer the Great" culminates in an attempted fix of the World Series, too, but the 1933 script, which was based on the play by Ring Lardner and George M. Cohan, is lighthearted about it. Joe E. Brown's Elmer Kane, the "miracle hitter and run-getter," piles up a gambling debt with some gangsters (led by the perdurable slime Douglass Dumbrille), because he's too innocent to understand that the games



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at their casino are played for money. Finally cleared, he smacks a ball off the wall in a rainstorm at Wrigley Field and slides home on his face in a mud puddle to win the World Series. Nothing to it.

The story line in "Eight Men Out" is more difficult, and by the end of the picture we're worn out, like Louvre visitors, because we've lost our concentration. The picture makes it tough for anybody to focus on a particular player, or even on two or three among the infamous eight. Nicknames and attributes and identifying scraps of dialogue fly about in the early ballpark, clubhouse, parlor-car, and hotel scenes, but we're almost at the grand-jury inquest before we can tell Lefty Williams from Chick Gandil or Swede Risberg for sure; we want a scorecard. (I thought "Eight Men Out" was better on a second viewing, and others who went back again or took home the video have told me the same thing.) Sayles has to hurry over the hearings in the end, and we never quite know whether the jury was also fixed when it voted to acquit the accused players. (The newly appointed first commissioner, Kenesaw Mountain Landis, banned them all for life just the same, because they hadn't reported the bribes.) The picture is vague because history is vague here, but after reconsulting Asinof I realized that the movie had done a little fixing of its own, by shining up its portraits of Buck Weaver and Shoeless Joe. Baseball scholars still don't know for sure what happened in that Series, in which Weaver batted .324 and Jackson .375, with a homer as well, even with the fixers' loot in their pockets. This year, there's been a fresh campaign in the sporting press to forgive and forget Jackson's misdeeds and wheel him into the Hall of Fame, where he'd certainly belong if he'd stayed clean: his lifetime .356 is the third-best average in the annals of the game.

Sayles, to his credit, has stayed his hand in other ways. There's no faked-up "Pride of the Yankees" domestic drama that would have pushed our sympathy and attention toward some center-stage actor, although you keep thinking that's about to happen. Eddie Cicotte (David Strathairn), the classy senior pitching ace who's been gypped out of a bonus by the odious Comiskey, agonizes with his innocent wife about his part in the fix, but only for a moment or two. We glimpse Mrs. Joe

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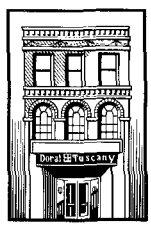

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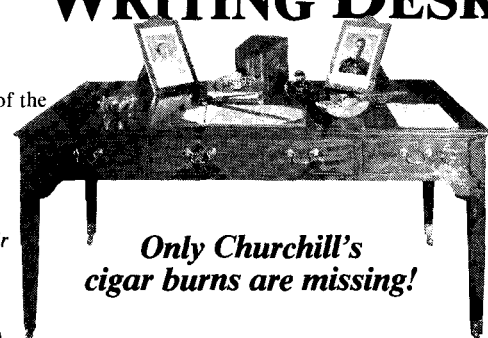

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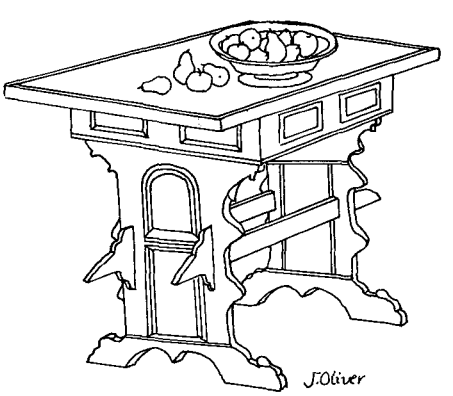
Jackson reading aloud to her illiterate husband (D. B. Sweeney), and hear the hard-burning third baseman, Buck Weaver (John Cusack), telling some street kids—a little mawkishly, perhaps—that his mistake was that he never grew up out there, but then the flash or the scene mercifully ends. Almost reluctantly, Sayles has to settle for a team photo, but the movie shows its class by never quite patronizing its foolish victim-heroes, and when the sweet sadness creeps in at the close—the exiled Shoeless Joe is playing under an alias for a New Jersey semi-pro team in 1925, and Weaver, in the stands, murmurs, "I saw him play . . . he was the best"—you don't mind much, because it feels earned.

There are strong faces and several brusque, satisfying portrait-performances in "Eight Men Out," and some pleasing work by celebrity nonactors, as well—Studs Terkel as the sportswriter Hughie Fullerton, John Sayles himself as Ring Lardner (an amazing likeness), and even a glimpse of Eliot Asinof, the original author, here elevated to league president. Charlie Sheen is wonderfully vapid as the brainless Hap Felsch, and Strathairn is tight-faced and withdrawn as the wronged Cicotte: there's a remarkable shot of him sitting alone in a marble courthouse corridor, with his folded, too neat topcoat alongside him, as he awaits his call to testify. But Sayles' feat in this flawed, almost impressive movie is to make some of his players recognizable in the end not by their acting but by the way they look on the field. Cicotte's smooth, effortless windup and delivery tell us in a minute how tough and expert he was out there, and Joe Jackson has a loping way of running the bases and an open-stance flat-bat, left-handed cut at the ball (D. B. Sweeney worked at this for many months before the shooting started, beginning by learning how to swing from the other side), which you pick up with an inner thrill each time you see it: you remember it as a fan, I mean. I can't think of any other baseball film or cast of baseball actors that pulls this off. The best shot in the picture is the last one, behind the final credits, when we see the eight players, not yet the Black Sox, cheerfully flinging the ball around on the sidelines in some pregame warmup, long before their troubles began. There's style and ease and skill in their playful, offhand movements—the stuff that great athletes toss off without effort—and the moment conveys their pleasure in the game and ours in watching them.

NOW and then when I emerged from the dark this spring, I asked some baseball people and some players which baseball movies they preferred, and it came as a shock to me that some of them disliked "Bull Durham." They thought that there was too much sex in it, and that it was bad for the image of the game. But I shouldn't have been surprised. I always have to keep reminding myself that there is as much variety of opinion and taste and private preference among sports people as there is in any other profession; we fans must give the players the last word about baseball authenticity, to be sure, but an opinion poll of their favorite baseball movies wouldn't tell us much. One doesn't need Bat Masterson to make up one's mind about "Red River" or "Shane." But I don't care what anyone else says about "Bull Durham," which is a comic delight and maybe a miracle. It's the first baseball movie that gets things right without trying; there isn't a line in it that feels reverent or fake-tough or hurriedly explanatory, or that tries to fill in the uninitiated about what's going on out there. It assumes you're going to stay with the game, even in its dreariest, dusty middle innings, when the handful of folks in the stands are slumped down on their spines waiting for something to happen, even a base on balls. It's an adult's homage to the game ("There's no guilt in baseball, and it's never boring," Susan Sarandon says in her now celebrated "Church of Baseball" voice-over), and it's about people who have been around and have come back to baseball as grownups, willing to strip away the clichés and the uplift and the mystical crap to find how strong and funny and rich the sport remains at its center. Its characters talk about the game lightly but with avid pleasure, and they back away a little after they've said something sharp or freshly appreciative about it, as if they were asking themselves if it's really true—is baseball really this great? This is the way a few friends of mine talk about baseball at times—not idle, sometime fans, or macho males who are simply sustaining their year-round sports guff, but men and women who have suddenly or slowly attached themselves to the game, usually through some particular team, and then can't quite believe how wonderful baseball can be, how baffling and heartbreaking, and how rewarding.



"Bull Durham" came out last year, but it feels like a classic already, and probably needs little recapitulation here. The story—Crash Davis (Kevin Costner), an experienced but beaten-down catcher, a career minor-leaguer, is brought down to the Class A Durham Bulls in order to educate and smooth up a great young scatter-arm pitching prospect, Nuke LaLoosh (Tim Robbins), who's headed for the majors if he can only get his stuff and his head together—has a nice balance to it, because it allows its veteran hero to show us, along with Nuke, how the game should be approached and held in mind as well as how it should be played. "Don't hold the ball so hard," Crash says to his crazily impatient kid battery-mate. "It's an egg." In a later scene, Crash says, "You gotta play this game with fear and arrogance"; Nuke murmurs "Fear and ignorance," and of course Crash loses his temper again. But Nuke isn't really dumb—just careless and in a hurry. He doesn't have a clue when Crash tells him that strikeouts are Fascist and to throw ground balls because they're more democratic, but in time he begins to pitch better, and slowly he begins to get it, too. Near the end, he listens with sad affection when Crash drunkenly expatiates about the trifling one extra hit per week—a flare, a ground ball with eyes, a dying quail—that separates a major-league hitter from a lifelong minor-leaguer: the edge of talent that he will never possess.

The movie's writer and director, Ron Shelton, played minor-league ball for five years, so none of this feels worked up or literary. He's found actors who can run and throw a little, and who can go through the move-

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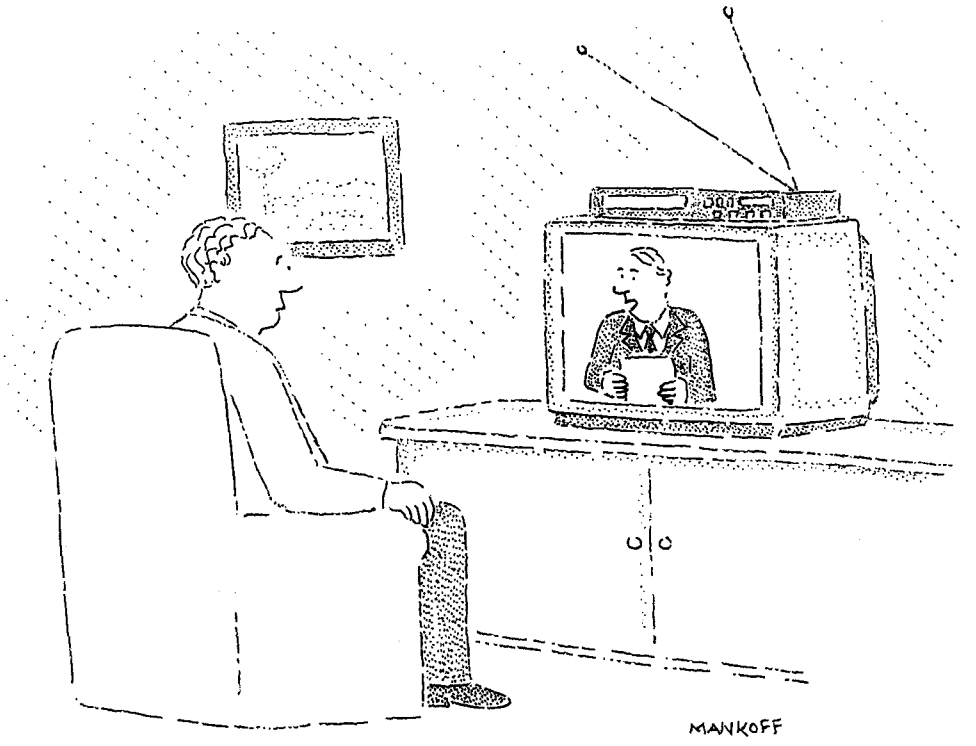
ments of a double play, but he doesn't keep cutting away from them in an attempt to jack up the look of the baseball. The pegs and pitches here are probably only a hair above half speed by pro standards (although Nuke does let fly with one fastball that seems to have some pop on it), but the flow is there, and that's good enough. Shelton's skills aren't limited to the diamond. He's drawn exceptional performances from his three leads, of which the most surprising is Tim Robbins as Nuke (he's ridiculous and charming on the mound, with his overconfident stare and a hotdog, Valenzuela roll of his eyes in mid-windup), who actually does seem a little smarter and more thoughtful, against all odds, by the time he's called up to the big show. As Annie, Susan Sarandon is a grownup, too—beautiful and sexual and sure of herself, kooky and literate at the same time. She picks out Nuke as her summer bedmate, but you know that Crash will get there in the end, because he and Annie are so alike; they're old enough to know there's no big hurry. Kevin Costner's Crash Davis is worn down and beat up but always in charge of things: an old catcher if there ever was one. He looks right not just throwing and swinging the bat but in the way he trudges out to the mound, carrying his mask in his hand and wondering how the hell he got here and what he can say to this boob to make him pay attention, so we can all get back in the shade again. He wants things done right, as they should be in baseball—and everywhere else. Nuke, strumming a guitar on the team bus, sings "She may get woolly, young girls, they do get woolly, because of all the stress" to the tune of "Try a Little Tenderness," and Crash goes bonkers and grabs the instrument and tells him how to sing the old lyrics properly. "I hate people who get the words wrong," he says.

"Bull Durham" is as fresh and funny and surprising about sex as it is about baseball, which is saying a lot. It's certainly the first movie that ever suggested (and enjoyed) the fact that ballplayers are sexual animals, objects of vivid interest to women. They do beautiful things with their bodies, it says, and we watch them not just to see who's going to win. This is the ongoing joke about the movie, and of course it holds up. It's a funny picture, and not only because of its now famous set pieces, like the mound conference during which the players discuss whether to buy silver candlesticks for a teammate who's about to get married (this wasn't in the original script), or Crash teaching Nuke the clichés he's going to need when he deals with the big-city media. A friend of mine went to the picture with a man from Israel who thought he knew baseball and knew America but who was startled by the ongoing flood of light laughs from the audience. "What are they laughing at?" he'd whisper in the dark. "What's funny about *that*?" Some of those jokes are little jabs at orthodoxy and at the family-value glop of other baseball movies. When Nuke gets the word that he's going up to the show, his down-home dad, who's there on a visit, suggests that they all join in a little prayer of thanks, but Annie says, "Oh, let's not." And when Crash needs the pine-tar rag during an at-bat, the smiling young batboy whispers "Get a hit," but Wonderboy isn't wanted this time. "Shut up," Crash says, and he goes out to take his hacks.

"Bull Durham" moves along and takes its time, too, just like baseball. There are nicely extended midgame scenes—Crash muttering to himself in voice-over as he works out an at-bat against an enemy pitcher, or worrying about Nuke's head when the busher seems to be closing in on a shutout. Most plans and hopes fail, just as they do in the real game, and when Crash does hit a homer (he's called it in advance) he makes a mock bow and a "woo woo" gesture to his laughing teammates in the dugout as he heads on down to first. He knows how lucky he's been, and so do we.

"Bull Durham" was a big hit when it came out, and its first inevitable spinoff was "Major League," a comedy still in the theatres here and there, which also has a retread old catcher, here played by Tom Berenger, as its hero. The movie has a rushed, corner-cutting feel to it, though, and the jokes are so broad and dim-witted that we groan to ourselves for laughing at them. There's a lot of dirty-mouth cursing, which takes the place of repartee, and we get the little slapstick joke about each of the different players in the first nanosecond—a quick black outfielder who is named Willy Mays Hayes; a voodoo-afflicted Hispanic slugger who shaves his head with a machete; an overpaid sissy third



"And now a correction: Portions of last night's story on diving mules which were read with an air of ironic detachment should actually have been presented with earnest concern."

• •

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baseman (Corbin Bernsen) who has yuppie plans for his life. Bernsen is the least convincing major-leaguer since Gary Cooper. The rookie pitcher, Wild Thing Ricky Vaughn (it's Charlie Sheen again: he must have got traded), can't get the ball over the plate until somebody persuades him to wear glasses, and then he's Bob Feller; the whole problem takes about two minutes. The plot involves another fix—the showgirl owner of the Cleveland Indians wants them to finish last, so she can move the franchise to Miami, but when the assorted losers who have been chosen to pad the roster find out, they decide to win instead—and it's no more demanding than I've made it sound here, and most of the other twists are so feeble that they're given up in mid-progress. A lot of actual big-league players loved this movie, I'm told, and I can't help thinking that it may have been because nobody was expecting them or us to believe it. It's a goof.

In the second half of "Major League"—along about the seventh inning, let's say—there's a rally that makes you sit up and cheer up. The movie suddenly throws away its soapy little turns of plot and stays with the crowds as they watch the Indians start to pick up momentum. There are bopping bar scenes, with the fan-patrons yelling about game stuff on the television screen, and we see Wild Thing T-shirts beginning to turn up on downtown street corners. The people who made the movie—it was written and directed by David S. Ward—somehow manage some convincingly exultant crowd scenes in nice old Milwaukee County Stadium, and the sign-waving, screeching, dugout-dancing throngs during the Indians' one-game divisional playoff with the Yankees reminded me of the game-long celebrations at Three Rivers Stadium in 1979, when the "We Are Family" Pirates were winning and sweeping us up in their wonderful party. Fan excitement hasn't been done much in baseball movies, and it gives this flick an unexpected whiff of freshness and fun. There's a happy small scene in which the players make a rap-song American Express Card commercial, with Willy Mays Hayes sliding in at the last minute to say "Don't Steal Home Without It," and the Indians do win in the end, of course—on a bunt, of all things. You can't believe the movie wins in the end, either: it may be only a little single, but it's a hit.

I DIDN'T entirely abandon baseball—the real thing instead of its depiction—during my film festival, and I never found any problems in adjustment whenever I went out to Shea or up to Yankee Stadium, for the two entertainments are nothing alike. Now and then, however, I'd finish a baseball rerun on my home set and flip over to a televised ballgame: an amazing shift, almost a revelation, in spite of the familiarity of what I found there. Games in progress, I realized, contained not just a sports story in the making but swift, onflowing catch-up on a couple of dozen stories and characters I already knew and remembered and cared about. It was like picking up an enormous novel (to change forms, for a moment) that I had been immersed in for days or weeks, which would then swiftly bring back old friends and enemies and crotchety neighbors, now all caught up in fresh difficulties. I think we fans sometimes forget how much we know, or can be quickly reminded of, about a couple of hundred ballplayers and their teams and managers, wounds and hopes: know *well*, I mean, to the degree that a player's smallest gesture—a fiddled-with batting glove, a distinctive cap angle, the way he grinds his back foot in the batter's box just before the pitch—can please and comfort us like the face and tone of voice of a cheerful acquaintance or an old friend unexpectedly encountered on the street. Baseball seems to have more of this built-in fiction or family history to it than other sports, and television can sometimes bring us the attribute more clearly than a seat at the park, if only because of the medium's sophisticated use of closeup—that sharp little dig in the ribs for our attention. Baseball is a great storyteller, better than Scheherazade, and effortlessly spins its whodunits and sentimental novels, shoot-outs and comedies, and high or low operas, game after game and week after week, for its casual or attentive devotees. One afternoon, I finished another baseball rerun on my video—I think it was "Bang the Drum Slowly"—punched REW on my wand, flipped over to Channel 4 of the TV, and was instantly transported into the midst of a rowdy Cubs-Cardinals encounter at Busch Stadium, brought to me by NBC's "Game of the Week." Pitchers pitched, groaning with the effort, batters banged away, and the cameras sailed and flew and zoomed down close to a batter, over to some fan faces, up and away to deep center field, in tight on the umpire's hand holding his indicator, staring over the pitcher's shoulder at the catcher's waggling fingers semaphoring a sign, while the announcers, Vin Scully and Tom Seaver, murmured and speculated and filled us in. There was Whitey Herzog mumbling something and chewing on something and resettling his cap over his scrub-brush coiffure after a homer by the Cubs' Mitch Webster; here was Don Zimmer stumping out to the mound, with his thick, short Brian Donlevy arms making a parenthesis around his middle; here was Calvin Schiraldi's unhappy stare, sadder and more soulful as he fell behind in the count. Ozzie Smith, blank-faced under his cap, glided, pirouetted, and flipped, and went back to his post with the same unsurprised "What did you expect?" look on him as the cheering and applause fell about him once again. Mitch Williams, the Cubs' madman new reliever, flung the ball and then hilariously flung himself after it, finishing with his back to the batter and himself peering over his own left shoulder in case of accident—in case anybody somehow made contact. Here came Dan Quisenberry, still pinkly quizzing away—go, Quis!—lobbing his up-and-down sinkers from his shoe tops and then half falling down himself, but with a more thoughtful, more gentlemanly mien. Commercials crossed my screen, cloud shadows crossed the bright field, the lead changed hands and then changed back, and the crowd roused itself and sank back again in despair. Somebody won—I forget who—but the announcers reminded us it was early yet in the summer and to wait and see. It was a

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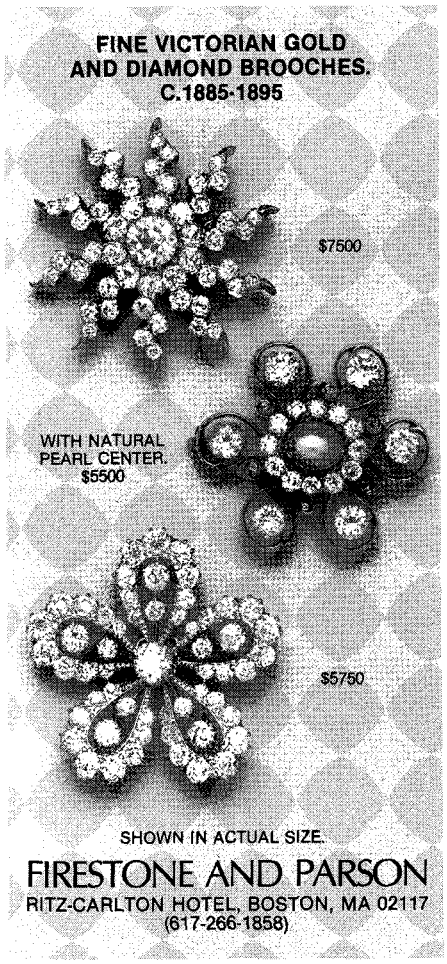
good game, and, watching it, I understood once again what a daunting job it must be to make a decent baseball movie, and how tough the competition really is. Baseball games and baseball movies aren't after the same thing, to be sure, but they both want our attention. Ballgames win us without effort, like genius authors or dazzling athletes—like Dickens or Ozzie Smith—while the guys with scripts and cameras must think and confer and strain over the same stuff, and hope for our forgiveness when they're done. It's amazing that movie baseball works at all, considering the odds.

JUST when "Eight Men Out" and "Bull Durham" and parts of "Major League" made me think the movies had finally started to get the hang of baseball, along came "Field of Dreams." America has squeezed this picture to its bosom like Mom Gehrig, and I sense there's not much point in my carrying on here for too long about how much I didn't care for it. In the reviews it's been likened to a Capra movie or to a Disneyworld attraction, but for me it was a Sara Lee chocolate layer cake, with icing so thick that I could feel it dripping onto my shoes. Kevin Costner—a gentler, kindlier Costner—is back again, here as Ray Kinsella, an ex-hippie who's doing O.K. as an Iowa farmer (Amy Madigan is his smart, upbeat wife, and Gaby Hoffman is their young daughter) until a voice (or a Voice: it's the Big Fellow Upstairs) tells him to build a ballfield right in the middle of his corn crop. Ray obliges, single-handedly laying down a floodlit diamond of such opulence that you think he's hoping for an expansion franchise, and his vaguely promised reward is the arrival onfield of Shoeless Joe Jackson (Ray Liotta), limned in white light, who looks a little slack-jawed but seems to have picked up the sounds of literacy, or the sounds of writing, during his stopover in the Sweet By-and-By: "I'd wake up at night with the smell of the ballpark in my nose and the cool of the grass on my feet . . . the thrill of the grass." Jackson has also been reversed in the Darkroom Up There, for he now throws left and bats right (like Rickey Henderson and Cleon Jones), instead of the other way around, as he did in life. Kinsella—it's the last name of the author of the originating novel, "Shoeless Joe," who gave it to the hero—responds to further instructions over the Vox Dei and so travels to Boston and to Minnesota to collect a disillusioned leftish novelist, Terence Mann (in the book, it was J. D. Salinger), played by James Earl Jones, and the ghost of a dead country doctor (Burt Lancaster), who once played half an inning for John McGraw's Giants. By the time they get back to Iowa, the creditors are snapping at the Kinsella mortgage, but Shoeless Joe has picked up a few more illustrious major-league deads, including (we're told) Smokey Joe Wood and Mel Ott and Gil Hodges; we don't know what league they're in or who's playing whom, but, to their credit, they don't seem to mind the endless batting practice or the sounds of snuffling in the theatre.

"Field of Dreams" is a little smarter and more fun than I'm making it sound here. It skips along in its own sunshine, and there are some small jokes to make you feel less sentimental and less used (one of the spectral Black Sox, slipping back into invisibility in the center-field corn rows, kids around by yelling "I'm melting! I'm mel-l-ting!" like the Wicked Witch of the West in "The Wizard of Oz"), but its Hallmarky messages are a caution. The dreamy field, it turns out, is needed so that Ray can be reconciled with his late father, a fan and would-be pro player who idolized Shoeless Joe; there was a falling-out ("When I was fourteen, I started to refuse," Ray says. "Can you imagine an American boy refusing to play catch with his father?"), but the two make it up on-screen by T.-ing the old P. around in the gloaming (Dad can't throw for beans, but never mind), and Terence, Darth Vadering the moral for us in his suspenders, says that the one American constant through all the years has been baseball: "This field, this game, is part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good and could be again."

The goo of goodness lies so thick over "Field of Dreams" that I probably shouldn't have been bothered by its dopiness or its wacky baseball, but its dreams kept waking me up. I liked being at Fenway Park with Ray and Terence until they suddenly walked out on me in the fourth inning—"Hey, guys, I thought you said you were *fans!*"—after spotting a mystical message on the scoreboard, and when Ray asked what American boy wouldn't want to play catch with his pop, I



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quickly thought of Ty Cobb and Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio and, yes, Lou Gehrig, and a million more who never did and (sorry) who never said they'd missed it. More things seemed wrong with the actor-players and the baseball action in "Field of Dreams" than I could quite account for, in fact, and it took a smart friend (Bill James, the eagle-eyed baseball historian) to point out to me that, for one thing, it looked like they'd made the ball bigger in the flick—made it dreamier, I guess. The movie ends with a long, ascending night shot of the car headlights of arriving fan families, who are coming in countless numbers to watch the Spooks play and thus to save the farm for the Kinsellas. (Wise old Terence has told Ray to charge twenty bucks a pop for admission, which is eight-fifty more than the going rate for box seats at Wrigley Field, but maybe this is going to be more of a theme park.) All I could think of as the lights came on and the smiling folks around me began gathering up their wadded Kleenexes was the inexorably arriving parking crunch at the Kinsella place (the rest of the cornfield would go to blacktop), the Portosans, the uniformed security goons, the Doppelfranks concession, and the blazered lawyers and agents. In dreams begin cable rights.

There may be a point here beyond jokes or some fresh concern about our national hyperglycemia readings. Organized baseball loves its image as a family-centered, nonviolent, tradition-based entertainment, but I wonder at times if any of that matters much. Maybe it's a load. Other sports get along well, or well enough, without this old heavy-mohair mantle of goodness, and maybe the commissioner or somebody else could arrange to loan it out to one of them—to basketball or stock-car racing or croquet—for a season or two and see if our game didn't feel lighter and quicker on its feet without it. I like baseball, the game and the games, but I can't always understand why it's so hard to look at the pastime with a clear gaze. We seem to want to go on sweetening it up, frosting the flakes, because we want it to say things about ourselves that probably aren't true. We don't have to go to the movies to find this out, either; we can just look at the TV news and the newspapers. All this spring and summer, I've been reading about Pete Rose, and wishing—with decreasing hope lately; say it ain't so, Pete—that the stories about his gambling and his foolishness were wrong. But the home Cincinnati fans—great numbers of them, at least—aren't waiting for the facts about Rose's betting to come out, one way or the other, after the legal squabbles are resolved; they believe in Pete. It's an article of faith, and they want the truth about him to be their truth, nothing else. I think it will be a sad day if Rose ends up being exiled from the game he illuminated and made joyful with his play. That would be a tragedy for him, but something less, surely, for the rest of us, unless we go on insisting, against all evidence, that our sports heroes must all be as good at life as they were at their games. That doesn't feel like a useful dream to hang on to. I'm told that Rose has received an offer for the film rights to his story, but I don't expect that a film bio would mean much. It's strange, because I've been seeing moving pictures of Pete Rose for weeks now—Pete up at bat, glaring out at the man on the mound and then leaning over the plate like a surveyor to follow the flight of the ball past his knees and into the catcher's mitt, and then flicking his gaze back at the home-plate ump, fighting for the call. I can see him waggling his fat-barrelled bat and fouling off pitches, and then, with the odds somehow mastered and turned his way, putting the bat on the ball once again and serving it smartly into left-center field; he sees a chance for two—and so do I, in the same half instant, and I jump to my feet, even though I know the outcome already, as he piston-thumps around first, spraying dirt and excitement along his bending path. Pete bangs into the base—safe by inches, safe by a mile—and pops up on his feet again, slaps his gloved hands together, settles his helmet with a fist-rap, and stares down at third now, ready for the next thing. These are memories, but they're crisp and clear, and I don't think they'll ever go away. They make a great movie.

—ROGER ANGELL

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SILVER LINING DEPARTMENT

[From Scientific American]

Some financial models, on the other hand, yield a positive societal value for a pack of cigarettes: smokers take more sick leave than nonsmokers and inflate group life-insurance premiums, but they tend to die before costing society much in pensions or nursing-home care.

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

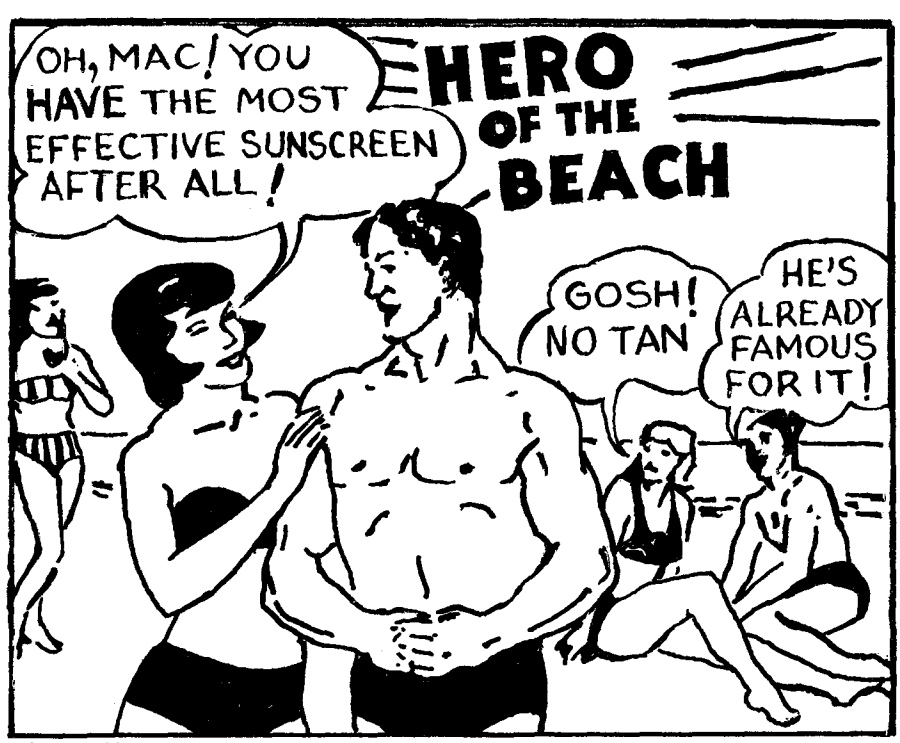
TO THE LEFT OF ZERO

At about nine o'clock on the morning of April 20, 1988, an unidentified caller informed police headquarters in Tijuana, Mexico, that a dead man was slumped inside an automobile in a residential neighborhood about eight miles east of the downtown area. The officers who went to investigate found a blue 1981 Ford LTD, with Mexican plates, that had apparently rolled to a stop against a building under construction on a street corner. On the front seat was the body of a middle-aged man, who had been shot several times in the neck and torso and had apparently expired almost instantly. The police surmised, in their initial report, that the victim had died shortly after 8:30 A.M. from shots fired either by someone running along beside the car or by someone in a high-riding vehicle such as a pickup truck; according to a couple of unnamed witnesses whom police interviewed on the spot, the killer or killers had been driving a brown pickup truck with a camper shell and had pulled up alongside the Ford as it moved down the street. Someone else testified to the presence in the area of another car, possibly a blue Pontiac Trans Am, which had hurriedly left the scene after the shooting. There must have been at least two assailants, the police believed, one of whom had forced the driver of the Ford to stop or slow down while his companion committed the murder.

These and many other details and speculations came to light in the immediate aftermath of the discovery, but it was the identity of the victim that caused a sensation. He was a forty-seven-year-old journalist named Héctor Félix Miranda, nicknamed El Gato (The Cat), the author of a column called "Un Poco de Algo" ("A Little Bit of Something"), which was widely read not only locally but all over the country. It appeared regularly in a weekly newspaper called *Zeta*, which Félix co-edited with a partner, Jesús Blancornelas. When the news of his death was announced, his colleagues were quick to express outrage and to call on the authorities to bring his murderers to justice. "This crime must not remain unpunished or be forgotten," Víctor Hernández, the president of the Tijuana Journalists' Association, said in a press conference, and he also reported that his organization had already dispatched a letter to both federal and local authorities calling for a thorough investigation and the capture of whoever was responsible.

Nearly everyone commenting on the event pointed out that in the past decade at least thirty journalists had been killed in Mexico, and perhaps as many as forty. "It has become apparent to us that the Mexican government is unable to protect the lives of journalists and bring to justice the assassins who are responsible for their murder," declared a letter that was signed by Herman Bacha, the chairman of the Committee for Chicano Rights, in San Diego, and addressed to President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico. "The ultimate result," the letter concluded, "could be the destruction of freedom of the press in Mexico." And Miguel Cervantes, a staff writer for *Zeta*, said that morning, "This is one of the things we journalists in Mexico have to face."

Slaughtering journalists has long been a Mexican pastime. In 1956, Manuel Acosta Meza, the publisher of *El Imparcial* and a correspondent for the San Diego *Union*, was gunned down outside his home in Tijuana as his paper was going to press with a story about criminals selling protection to prostitution rings. A few years later, another Tijuana journalist, Carlos Estrada Sastre, was beaten to death in a hotel room. In 1986, Ernesto Flores, the publisher and city editor of *El Popular*, in Matamoros, and Norma Moreno, a columnist for the paper, which had been running a series of articles on drug dealers and political corruption there, were killed by automatic gunfire. During the four months before Félix's assassination, two other reporters, Manuel Burgueño Orduño, in Mazatlán, and Jesús Michel Jacobo, in Culiacán, were murdered, presumably because of stories they had written about the drug traffic in their home state of Sinaloa. But probably the most notorious case was that of Manuel Buendía, a fifty-eight-year-old columnist for *Excelsior*, in Mexico City, and two hundred other newspapers, who had written fearlessly about corruption and questionable police practices. He was shot in the back on a crowded street in the capital in 1984. Despite a huge public outcry and a supposedly intensive search for the killer, it took five years and the election of a new


OH, MAC! YOU HAVE THE MOST EFFECTIVE SUNSCREEN AFTER ALL!
HERO OF THE BEACH
GOSH! NO TAN
HE'S ALREADY FAMOUS FOR IT!
Stuart Leeds

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government before a suspect, a former federal police official, was charged and arrested.

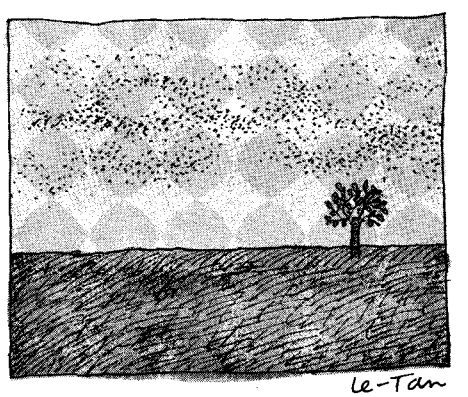
Félix was a prime candidate for elimination, even though, as his colleagues noted, the tone of his columns was jocular and he attacked his targets with quips and puns. "His intention was not to create ill will," Blancornelas told an American reporter, "but to entertain the people, to say what people themselves could not say, using popular language." The problem was that he entertained by making fun of the sort of citizens who were not used to being laughed at, including not only President de la Madrid and the ruling party's candidate to succeed him, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, but such local big shots as Xicotencatl Leyva Mortera, the governor of Baja California, and Federico Valdes, the mayor of Tijuana. He portrayed the latter two as a couple of drunks not averse to taking bribes and profiting illegally from their positions of power, and he hammered away at them week after week, in a style full of gossipy double meanings and insider references. "He never showed fear," Blancornelas said. "He would say, 'I have seven lives, like a cat.' "

In one of Félix's more recent attacks, he had referred to Valdes as "*pederico*," a play on the word "*pedo*," which in Mexican slang means a drunk. In his last column, which covered a campaign visit to Tijuana by Salinas to inaugurate a new housing project, he had commented on the number of soldiers it took to protect the candidate and quoted a tourist who asked, "Is this Panama?" Félix went on to describe the housing project as a development "so small they don't know if the rooms are for dogs, and instead of toilet paper they use party streamers." Further on, he described the visit of a female census-taker to the house of a man with nine children. The man's raunchy replies to the woman's routine questions clearly mirror the frustrations of a class of people struggling along in a society in which public institutions work poorly, if at all. Toward the end of the interview, one of the man's children shouts, "Dad, close your legs, your balls are showing!" When the woman protests, the man replies, "Well, if I call them eggs they'll eat them."

Such vulgarities were occasionally deplored by Félix's critics, including colleagues on other newspapers, a couple of whom commented after his murder that by his style of attack he had done much to bring retribution upon himself. "But why not write this when Gato was alive?" Blancornelas asked, pointing out that Félix only said what people secretly believed to be true but could not express. Miguel Cervantes observed, "Félix's columns were often libellous, but the victims were reluctant to sue, because of the publicity. Most of the people he wrote about had long tails."

Félix's popularity was never in question. On the evening of the day he was killed, several thousand people gathered in the middle of town to protest, then marched through the Tijuana business district for about an hour, and eventually massed outside the funeral home where the body lay, pending the arrival of relatives from Félix's home town, Los Mochis. The crowd chanted angry slogans, one of which called for the resignation of the Governor, and carried banners, one of which asked, "MR. GOVERNOR, WHO KILLED GATO FÉLIX?" Many of the protesters had black ribbons pinned to their lapels or waved black scarves. The protests continued the next morning, and included a public gathering of journalists from the city's two press associations, which had agreed to keep a daily watch over the progress of the investigation. A delegation proceeded to the headquarters of the then deputy state attorney general, Josefina Fregoso, to persuade her to intervene with the police, and late that afternoon there was another march through the streets, again ending up at the funeral home, where mourners filed in to pay their last respects well into the night.

The following day, still another large group accompanied the body to the airport, from which it was flown to Los Mochis. As the plane departed, it circled the city, then dipped low over the watching crowd, as if to say one last goodbye. It was an emotional moment, and many were in tears. "It is necessary to clear up this business," one of Félix's colleagues said later that morning. "But it will be difficult to persuade the authorities to investigate as they should. In Mexico, when it comes to taking forceful actions in matters that involve important interests and powerful people, those given the task are too often to the left of zero."



IT is not easy to be an independent journalist in Mexico. One reason is that the pay is very low. Most reporters earn basic salaries of less than four hundred dollars a month, for which they are expected to work a six-day, or even a seven-day, week, filing at least half a dozen stories a day. To survive, they often have to take on free-lance assignments and also part-time jobs that have nothing to do with their profession. Miguel Cervantes, who has been earning less than a thousand dollars a year from *Zeta*, contributes stories and photographs to the Associated Press and the Los Angeles *Times*, and, in addition, works as an adjuster for several car-insurance firms.

It is no secret that many reporters in Mexico are willing recipients of *el sobrecito*, an envelope containing wads of peso notes that are a reward for ignoring certain stories or for writing ones that are favorable to business tycoons, prominent politicians, and other people of power and influence. Tijuana's largest daily, *El Mexicano*, with a circulation of about eighty thousand, is regarded by many citizens as the official mouthpiece of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, known as the PRI, which has been in power continuously since it was created, in 1946. The newspaper is owned by the Confederation of Mexican Workers (C.T.M.), a national union that is considered a pillar of the PRI, and it features in-depth articles, editorials, and front-page stories that are invariably favorable to government initiatives and extoll the virtues of the politicians in office. "Some people have told me they wonder what planet *El Mexicano* is writing about," Rogelio Lavenant, the editor of a rival local daily named *Al Día*, recently remarked. The editors and reporters of *El Mexicano* have vehemently denied that they are so-called *oficialistas*, but they certainly

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appear to be more prosperous than their more independent-minded colleagues, and they operate out of comfortable, computerized offices, whose walls are graced with photographs of various government officials.

The price of not playing along with the system can be high. The press depends on the government not only for its allotment of newsprint and ink but also for advertising. And although Mexico has a population of approximately eighty-three million and the total circulation of its newspapers is only about a million, to outsiders the authorities often seem extremely sensitive to criticism and obsessed by a need to control what reporters say about them. The degree of concern is surprising, because most Mexicans derive their view of the universe from watching television, and TV programs are scrupulously edited to reflect an establishment outlook. About twenty-five million people tune in daily to the news programs produced by Televisa, a giant corporation that is privately owned but adheres rigidly to the PRI line. Nevertheless, what one observer has called "the government's continuing obsession with the written press" persists; negative news items about local officials tend not to get onto the front pages of such papers as *El Mexicano*, if they get in at all, and retribution follows quickly when an editor gets out of line. The foundation of the PRI's power lies in its close ties to the C.T.M. and the other major labor unions, which it supports with financial concessions and other benefits in exchange for tranquillity and loyalty at the polls. The publications that the unions don't actually own can easily be shut down by strikes.

In such an atmosphere, and with the odds stacked so formidably against them, it is miraculous that a handful of independent, muckraking newspapers have managed to survive—though, to be sure, some burst into bloom only to vanish practically overnight. In addition to *Zeta*, whose motto, prominently displayed on its masthead, is "Free as the Wind," the three best known are *El Norte*, *Proceso*, and *La Jornada*. All have been on the scene for at least several years, and publish exposés and often scathing attacks on the power structure. In Tijuana, perhaps because of its proximity to the border with the United States, journalists have consistently over the years shown more independence and more willingness to publish controversial stories than journalists elsewhere in the country, and the possibility of violence has seemed less threatening. "But you never know here," Fernando Romero, the Tijuana correspondent for the San Diego *Tribune*, recently said. "In Mexico, things are done with mirrors. You change the angle of the mirrors and suddenly you get a different view."

The view that most journalists hold now seems to be a dark one, a feeling that their lives are quite literally in danger. The offices of *Zeta*, in a modest two-story building on a quiet residential street not far from the Agua Caliente Racetrack and a main avenue, were sprayed with machine-gun fire early one morning in March of 1987, and threats against local reporters are commonplace. After *Al Día* ran a series of articles linking Baja California authorities and the state police to the drug traffic and the smuggling of aliens across the border, the paper's headquarters received several anonymous phone calls warning Rogelio Lavenant that someone was "out to get" the author of the articles, Enrique García Sanchez, and other staff members as well. García now carries a gun, and so do many of his colleagues; few of them make themselves noticeable in public places, and all are careful about forming new friendships. Many journalists vary their routes to their offices; Blancornelas always calls home before leaving the paper, so that his wife will know when to expect him and can alert the police if he fails to show up after the five minutes or so it takes him to drive home.

After Félix's murder, the Union of Democratic Journalists attempted to make a complete list of journalists who had been victims of violence in Mexico, and came up with a roster of twenty-nine killings since 1982, the year President de la Madrid took office. The government reacted with a detailed case-by-case analysis, presented in conjunction with a speech delivered by de la Madrid to the Association of Editors of the Republic in Mexico City on June 8th, the day set aside annually to celebrate the freedom of the press. "The Mexican press enjoys full liberties," he informed his audience. "We

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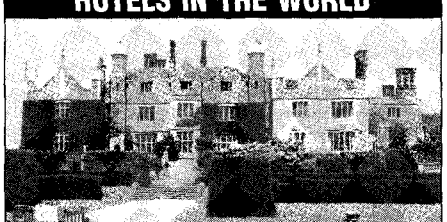

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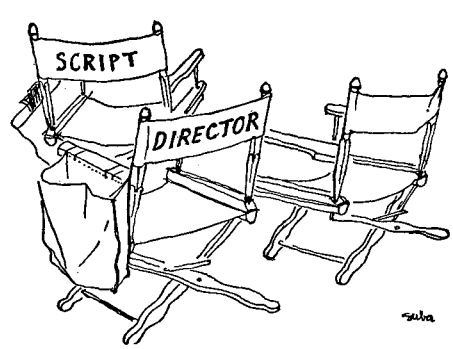
respect all the mediums of communication and all Mexican journalists, whatever their opinions may be, because in expressing them they give life to our regime of liberty, and substance to our constitutional pact." The report he presented was eighty pages long and listed twenty-four cases, each including the background of the victim, the circumstances of the killing, and the progress of the investigation. Of the twenty-four victims, all but five, according to the report, were killed while indulging in activities that had little or nothing to do with their profession. Some, the report said, merely called themselves journalists, because they had somehow acquired reporters' credentials—useful documents to have for gaining free admittance to public functions or for dealing with officials. Their deaths, it was stated, occurred simply as a consequence of acts of random violence, while at least three of the five murders of legitimate journalists almost certainly took place as the result of their writing about the drug traffic. Nowhere in the report was there any hint of a possible political motive behind any of the killings. As for Héctor Félix Miranda, he was described as a frequenter of gambling casinos who had twice been involved in "scandals of passion," and thus it was suggested that his murder might have been motivated by personal matters, having nothing to do with freedom of expression. According to Sally Chew, an associate of the Committee to Protect Journalists, an international organization based in New York, the report at least laid "the groundwork for a dialogue," but a number of Mexican journalists in Tijuana regarded it as a whitewash.

Jesús Blancornelas was born in 1936 and brought up in San Luis Potosí, in the middle of the country, about two hundred and fifty miles from Mexico City. He is a short, compactly built man with a full head of dark hair and a beard flecked with gray, who has a soft-spoken yet direct way of expressing himself. He studied to become an accountant, and worked in an auto-parts shop. He also competed in bicycle races and, at the request of a reporter, began to contribute notes on various contests to a local newspaper. In March, 1957, he became an apprentice sports reporter, and covered stories all over the country; then, in 1959, he was told about a newspaper, called *El Mexicano*, that was starting up in Tijuana. "I was alone and single, so I went," he recalls. "But when I arrived there all the positions in the sports section were taken, so I became a substitute for anyone who was off. In one year, I covered every kind of story, and I learned to be a real reporter."

In 1962, he became the managing editor of *El Mexicano*, thus learning the technical side of publishing as well, and two years later he helped to found *La Voz de la Frontera*, in Mexicali. By 1968, he had become its editor, but in 1974 he had what he calls his "first problem in my life as a journalist." He ran a series of articles in the paper, exposing collusion between public and private interests which had led to a jacking up of local electric rates, and he was fired a few weeks later, when the paper was sold. "Everyone in Baja was told not to give me a job, so in 1975 I moved to Hermosillo, Sonora, to work on a paper there," he says. He became close to the governor of the state and wrote a book about him, which became a best-seller in Mexico, going into nineteen printings: "I saved the money I made and moved back to Tijuana."

On his return, he managed to get a job at *Noticias*, a daily paper, but soon he became disenchanted with the working conditions, and began to meet regularly for coffee and talk with a group of journalists who felt pretty much as he did. In early 1977, Blancornelas and three others of the group put up five thousand dollars apiece to start a new weekly paper, called *ABC*, for *Adelante Baja California* (Forward Baja California). They bought a printing press in San Diego and set up shop in a small building that one of the partners owned in Tijuana. Félix joined them and also became a partner, after a column he had been writing for another newspaper was eliminated, and "A Little Bit of Something" quickly became *ABC's* most popular feature. "Our initial circulation was five thousand, and within six months all our money was gone," Blancornelas recalls. "But people responded to the fact that this was the first independent newspaper in Tijuana." Within two years, the circulation had risen to forty thousand, and Félix's column had become a fixture on the local scene.



Unfortunately, the creation of the newspaper coincided with the election of Roberto de la Madrid (no relation of Miguel) as governor of Baja California. He did not take kindly to the drumfire of criticism and investigative reporting which appeared in *ABC*, because much of it seemed to be directed at him—at his policies and his personal life as well as his administration. The newspaper published stories, with photographs, about the beating and torturing of suspects by the state police. It aired charges of fraud and corruption against state and municipal officials, criticized the authorities for a lack of public sanitary facilities, schools, and services, and mocked the pretentious behavior of de la Madrid himself. He was accused of nepotism and of having spent millions of public funds on himself, especially in the acquisition of four airplanes largely for his personal use. In December, 1977, the Governor reportedly observed of Blancornelas, who had been installed as the editor of the paper, "Insecticide ought to be applied to this insect of journalism."

Almost at once, Blancornelas recalls, he and Félix, his strongest ally, began to feel pressure from various sources. The National Chamber of Commerce—which, it was said, had been spurred to take action by General Alejandro Rosas Romandia, the state attorney general and de la Madrid's cousin—instituted an advertising boycott against the newspaper. All state-government ads were withdrawn. *ABC* reporters were barred from all official functions. A new building the staff had been about to move into was bought out from under them by a friend of the Governor. And the establishment newspapers, *El Mexicano* and its afternoon subsidiary, *Ultimas Noticias*, launched a series of front-page attacks accusing *ABC* of "yellow journalism" and referring to Blancornelas as a "mentally deranged traitor" who was in the pay of the C.I.A., the Los Angeles *Times*, and the San Diego *Union* and was plotting with his gringo pals

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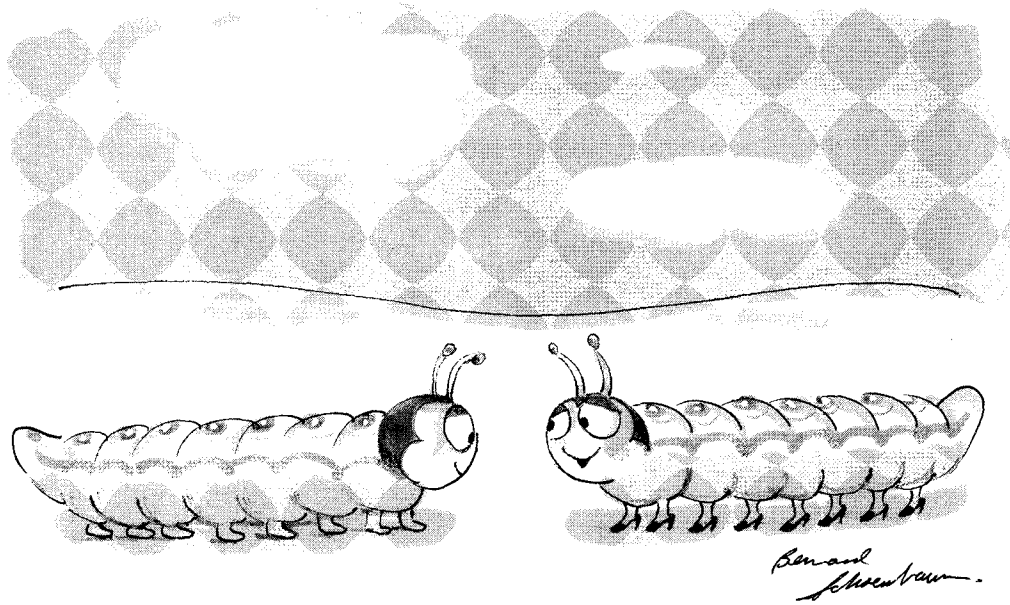
to defame Baja California and Mexico itself.

The most serious menace to the paper's survival came from the C.T.M.: in October of 1979, its local secretary accused Blancornelas of having backed the Communist Party and of having favored some staff members over others. Thirty-eight of *ABC's* fifty-six unionized employees sided with the editor, but they were told by union officials that they had no jurisdiction in the dispute. The union threatened to support a minority group that it controlled, and call a strike, which would have shut the operation down. By this time, the partnership had split, with Blancornelas and Félix on one side, and the two other partners, José Robles and Francisco Ramírez, opposing them (one of the original three had dropped out earlier). "It was the weight of de la Madrid's money," Blancornelas maintains. The Governor had, in effect, succeeded in splitting the partnership.



"I'm taking tap."

• •

Late on the evening of Thursday, November 2nd, employees of *ABC* who supported Blancornelas and Félix, anticipating a raid by the C.T.M., gathered, about forty-five strong, inside the newspaper's offices. A few minutes after midnight, three agents of the federal security police, who are charged with investigating subversive activities, walked into the building, ostensibly to keep an eye on the proceedings. "They are here to observe, because this is a political matter," Blancornelas told his followers. "They will make their report directly to the Ministry of the Interior. They're waiting for the violence to start. Then I'll be called a subversive, an agitator, and they'll throw me in jail." During the next hour, members of the state police showed up in some force, but they informed Blancornelas that they could do nothing to protect him and Félix except take them to headquarters. "We have to be neutral in this matter," one of them explained. The editor remained in the parking lot, while the staff locked themselves inside the building. At about one-fifteen, Blancornelas spotted a fleet of at least a dozen buses loaded with C.T.M. members arriving in the area, as well as taxis with other union goons parked across the street, and he ran up to an *ABC* photographer outside the building. "Get our guys out of there!" he yelled. "We've got to avoid bloodshed!"

It was all over within minutes. The *ABC* staff people left the building, and it was immediately occupied by about two hundred and fifty union men, many of whom were armed with clubs and had no idea what they were doing there; they had simply answered a union summons and been driven to the scene. A couple of hours later, sitting at home surrounded by colleagues and friends, Blancornelas said, "We had two years, ten months, and twenty-one days of freedom of the press in Baja California, and that's quite an accomplishment."

Governor de la Madrid denied having had anything to do with closing down the newspaper, but one evening a few days afterward, following a number of public protests against the action and a great deal of negative comment on it in the foreign press, he summoned Blancornelas to his home for a meeting. The place seemed to be teeming with cops. "He told me I could go on with *ABC*, but without Félix," Blancornelas recalls. "I replied, 'O.K., if you fire your attorney general and your chief of police.' He asked, 'How can you say this to me?' I answered, 'How can you ask me to fire Félix?' "

Twelve days later, *ABC* resumed publication, with Robles and Ramírez in control and the C.T.M. installed as the union representing all the workers. Ramírez declared that Blancornelas had not been fired but had simply failed to show up for work. "Where is he?" he asked. He added that a company check had bounced, and said, "There is a serious problem with the accounts."

As Blancornelas and Félix were making plans to launch another version of *ABC*—possibly from Ensenada, a large town about sixty-five miles south of Tijuana—the editor found himself formally charged with fourteen counts of having stolen *ABC* company funds. "They now say I've taken one and a half million pesos," he said at the time. (That was then about seventy thousand dollars.) "We're going to court to demonstrate that their ridiculous charges are not true. We have the proof in hand."

Unfortunately, according to Blancornelas, the judge assigned to the case was not inclined to consider evidence that the editor felt would absolve him. He went to Mexico City to try to gain some support from the authorities there, but was unsuccessful. Worse, he heard that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. On March 5, 1980, he fled across the border into the United States as a refugee from political persecution.

Blancornelas spent the next several weeks making speeches on university campuses all over the United States and addressing official bodies—including the United Nations and the Organiza-

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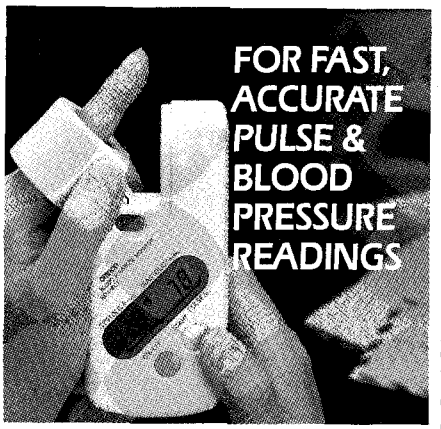

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tion of American States—in New York and Washington, where he also went from office to office drumming up support for freedom of the press in Mexico. "The idea was to publicize the event and compel the Mexican government to take notice," he says. In May of 1980, having rented an apartment in Chula Vista, a few miles across the border from Tijuana, he was granted a visa as a Mexican correspondent in the United States. "I was not to earn dollars," he explains, "and every six months I had to renew the visa." Each time he applied for a renewal, he found himself being "intensely interrogated" by officials of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and their questions never varied. "I was always asked if I was being paid by U.S. papers and where my money came from." He was instructed not to travel outside San Diego (he did so anyway), and it was made clear to him that the I.N.S. would prefer that he not give interviews or speak in public.

Meanwhile, in collaboration with Félix, he was making plans to launch *Zeta*. Félix had wanted to call the new publication *DEF*, a continuation of the alphabet. "That way, if they shoot it down we'll call the next one *GHI*," he told his friend. Blancornelas, however, was in favor of going right to the end of the line, and ultimately he and Félix agreed on *Zeta*. The partners were able to acquire a typesetting machine on credit from an American friend in San Diego, and it was shipped to Tijuana and set up in a house donated to the venture rent-free by another friend, a lawyer named Carlos Estrada, who was also representing Blancornelas in the ongoing embezzlement case.

Although *Zeta* was written and edited in Tijuana, the partners had prudently arranged to have it printed in San Diego. The first issue was ready for distribution in early April of 1980, in a sixteen-page tabloid format. An unsigned front-page editorial promised to restore freedom of expression to Baja California. "The episode we have lived through has been a lesson that has taught us the risks of being free, a lesson for those who ran the risk of repressing freedom and a lesson for those who ran the risk of betrayal," it stated. "We who were dispossessed now know how to avoid another robbery. Those who, like Roberto de la Madrid, dispossessed us will not want to feel another wave of repudiation. And those who betrayed us —some colleagues at *ABC* and other fellow-journalists in Tijuana—will surely not want to play such a repugnant role again." Inside, Blancornelas declared that freedom of the press did not exist in Mexico, and listed the journalists who had been killed, beaten up, or arrested for writing articles critical of the power structure.

The partners had every reason to believe that the authorities, wanting to do their utmost to keep the paper from being distributed in Tijuana, would seize it at the border. On April 10th, five thousand copies were stuffed into the trunk of a car, which Félix followed in his car, and at the border he called attention to himself by pretending that his vehicle had broken down and pushing it across the line. He was stopped and his car was searched. That afternoon, the first issues of *Zeta* were hawked through the streets of Tijuana by independent venders, and the first printing was sold out within hours, with some would-be buyers offering as much as five dollars for a copy. "That night, Félix and the newsboys came up to Chula Vista and we had a big celebration," Blancornelas recalls. The embezzlement charges against the editor had not been dropped, however, and he was still unable to go home. Nor would the I.N.S. allow his family to join him except on weekends. Whenever he became depressed, Estrada would take him for long drives on the California freeways to cheer him up. "He gave me domination over the freeways of San Diego," Blancornelas told a friend. It wasn't until after the national election of 1981, when Miguel de la Madrid visited Tijuana and was made aware of the circumstances of the case, that the charges against the editor were finally dropped, and he was able to go home, seventeen months after being forced to flee.

Over the last decade, the authorities have given up trying to shut *Zeta* down, and its circulation has grown to an average of about eighty thousand copies. What has changed, Blancornelas feels, is the climate. "It has been a phenomenon of maturation," he ex-

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plained recently. "The case of *ABC*, the case of *Zeta*, the case of Félix—they are all lessons for the government and the press. It is why I will not stop until the killers of Félix are caught. Not only the material killers but the intellectual authors of this crime."

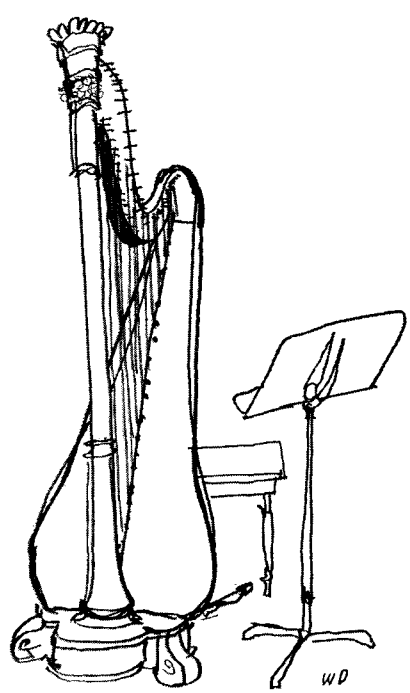
IN the days immediately after the murder, a newly formed committee of local citizens, calling itself the Permanent Assembly for Freedom of Expression, maintained pressure on the authorities to solve the crime. It organized daily demonstrations and distributed leaflets all over the city calling on the Governor to speak out. In addition, a group of journalists met every day at noon in front of the office of the deputy state attorney general, Josefina Fregoso, to hold a one-hour vigil, until, as one of them put it, "the assassins are brought to justice." Fregoso, an attractive woman with red hair and blue eyes, fielded questions every day on the progress of the investigation, and about a week after the killing she revealed that eleven suspects had been brought in for questioning by Gustavo Romero Meza, a veteran state policeman, who had been entrusted with the case.

Then, on April 30th, Fregoso's office announced that a man named Victoriano Medina Moreno, a thirty-seven-year-old security guard at the Agua Caliente Racetrack, had been charged with the crime. Furthermore, he had apparently confessed. Romero, a tall, big-bellied man in his early sixties, with a mustache and black-dyed hair, presided over the press conference at which this dramatic announcement was made, and he stated that the police were also looking for a possible accomplice, named Antonio Vera Palestina, who was suspected of having driven the getaway car. Medina, according to Romero, had been enraged by items that Félix had written about him, although no one could immediately recall exactly what Félix had said.

Romero said that Medina had been able to flag down the columnist's automobile, because the two men knew each other, and that with the murder weapon, a shotgun, hidden under his coat, he had walked over to the car and shot the journalist twice. Vera had been driving Medina's car, a blue 1977 Trans Am, which the police had picked up later. They had not yet found the gun, which they thought might have been secreted somewhere on the grounds of the racetrack, where Vera himself was suspected of being in hiding. Romero said that he had over forty men assigned to the case, and that the investigation was continuing.

During the press conference, Blancornelas repeatedly asked whom Medina worked for, and at first he failed to receive a specific answer. "He works for the racetrack" was the invariable reply from both Fregoso and Romero. Apparently, neither of them wanted to identify the owner of the track, but eventually Blancornelas was able to elicit from Romero the name of Jorge Hank Rhon, one of the richest men in Tijuana. Earlier in the week, *Zeta* had published a list of eight men whom the paper considered the principal suspects in the case, and one of the names was Hank Rhon. The others mentioned were Governor Leyva; the Governor's brother; the Governor's father; Mayor Valdes; Roberto de la Madrid, the former governor; Alberto Murguía, a close friend of Hank's; and an unspecified "passionate supporter of Salinas." All of them had been frequent targets of Félix's barbed shafts and had ample reason to be angry at him.

No one had been more savagely treated than Hank Rhon—the son of Carlos Hank Gonzáles, an enormously wealthy former mayor of Mexico City and a power within the PRI—whom Félix ridiculed for being a spoiled rich kid. (Gonzáles is currently the Minister of Tourism.) In recent columns, Félix had charged Hank Rhon with squandering money on various losing ventures, and also of having broken the law. His favorite name for Hank was El Pirruris, after a character, created by a Mexican comedian, who is a foolish Daddy's boy. He also liked to cite Hank as a prime example of a *chilango*—a nickname in Tijuana for any of the many immigrants who have come pouring into the city from the capital in recent years. (The *chilango* is a fish that spawns along the coastline of Veracruz during the spring, when tourists from Mexico City also tend to show up.) It is not a term of affection: *chilangos* are perceived as being rude, pushy, and contemptuous of local customs. "The *chilango* thinks he knows it all—he is arrogant, prepotent, boastful, presumptuous," Félix had written. "They're like the one-hundred-peso coin—they seem made of gold, but they are actually worthless." Some stores in Tijuana have put "Chilango, Go Home" signs in their windows, and the slogan appears on walls all over town.



Hank Rhon had not always been on Félix's hit list. He had arrived to take over the racetrack in the summer of 1985 and had immediately begun to invest heavily in the area, providing jobs and donating to charities, activities that established him—in Félix's eyes, at least—as a true *capitolino*, a person from the capital, as distinguished from an exploiting *chilango*. In fact, Félix had singled out Hank as just the sort of person whom Tijuanans should greet with open arms. "He is the antithesis of the *chilango*," he had said, in August, 1986, to an American reporter who was doing a story on the immigration phenomenon.

No one seems to know exactly when the relationship between the two men began to fall apart, but Blancornelas thinks that the split had to do with Hank's decision to grow a beard and wear his hair long—as a protest against God for the recent death of his brother, who had drowned while scuba diving. According to Blancornelas, Hank had apparently asked Félix not to write this story but had then spilled it to another reporter, an old friend of his, thus providing him with a little scoop. Negative assessments of Hank's character and of his contributions to the community began to appear in Félix's column shortly thereafter.

As soon as Hank's name surfaced at the press conference announcing Me-

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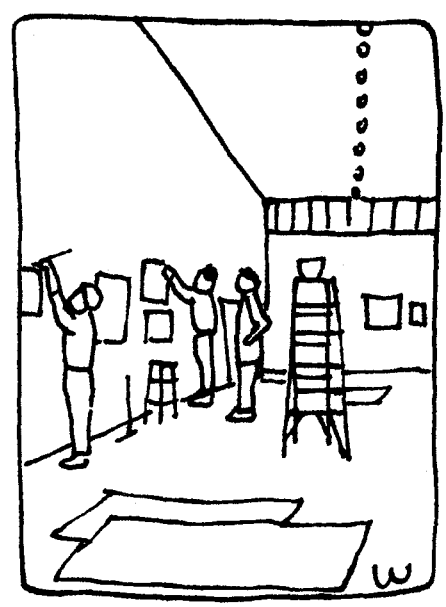
dina's arrest, several reporters asked whether Hank and Murguía, his close associate, had been questioned, but a spokesman for the state police replied, "They are not suspects." Had anyone searched the track? Romero said he couldn't go there without a court order, even though he had reason to believe that Vera Palestina, the alleged getaway driver, might be there. After the press conference, Blancornelas announced that he was satisfied with the progress of the investigation to date but that obviously it should go higher. Later, he told friends that it was a question of proper identification. "One must know what one is looking at," he said. "This animal has a duck tail, duck feet, a duck head, so perhaps it is a duck."

The following day, the police produced Medina, in handcuffs, for a ten-minute press conference, but he proved surprisingly uncoöperative. Reporters noted that his nose was red, his eyes were puffy and nearly closed, and his face was generally swollen and possibly bruised. He was barely able to answer the questions asked him, but he quickly denied any involvement in the killing. "I'm innocent," he said. "They punched me." The confession had been beaten out of him, he claimed, and he was now waiting to confer with his lawyers. A reporter asked him if he had been paid to murder Félix, citing a rumor that he had cashed a voucher for ten thousand dollars with the racetrack cashier on the day of the killing. "I don't remember," Medina mumbled. "No, there was no money."

Around midnight that evening, Hank Rhon received about a dozen members of the press in his office at the track. He denied having had anything to do with the crime. "Is it possible I ordered it? Yes. Did I? No," he said. "There are many people who had many reasons. Perhaps some of these people had personal reasons. . . . If I am guilty, I believe the police would act against me like anyone else." He said he could not account for the degree of enmity Félix had displayed toward him, but he believed that his friendship with the journalist had begun to disintegrate after he failed to attend one of Félix's parties. "He spoke to a public that liked to hear someone speaking badly of people who were better off," Hank said, and he added that the police were welcome to search the racetrack whenever they wished. He knew Romero Meza, who, it was later revealed, had owned racehorses and liked to go racing.

When Romero's men did search the grounds at the track, the following day, they found no trace of Vera Palestina or of the murder weapon. They did turn up an impressive array of other arms, however, including assault rifles and submachine guns. It turned out that Hank Rhon maintained a private security force of eleven heavily armed men, and also welcomed a daily allotment of fifty municipal policemen to help keep order at the track. The missing suspect, it became known, had worked for Hank and his father for fifteen years, and for at least the past three had been Hank's personal bodyguard. Before that, he had been a member of a federal anti-terrorist unit, which was disbanded because of charges of corruption, and, still earlier, of another police unit, dealing with juvenile delinquency, which had also been eliminated, after charges that it was more dangerous than the gangs it had been organized to control. Medina himself was reported to have been fired for "irregularities" from a previous job as a state police officer.

After the search at the track and such revelations as these, Blancornelas asserted that no bodyguard would act on his own, without a direct order from his boss, and that the crime had to have been ordered by someone higher up. He indicated that Hank Rhon had to be considered a prime suspect, but he did not rule out the possibility that others could have orchestrated the crime, for reasons of their own. He later eliminated both de la Madrid and Leyva from his list of suspects, but expressed the belief that the outcome of the investigation now had to be of concern "at the highest political levels."



MEDINA was officially arraigned on May 3rd for the murder of Héctor Félix. "I will acknowledge that that is my signature and fingerprints," Medina declared, referring to the confession, as he was hustled into court. "But I haven't admitted to anything." He had told the police that the day of the murder he and Vera had gone to the racetrack, where they had left his car—the blue Trans Am that witnesses had identified at the scene of the shooting—and picked up another vehicle to drive to the border. There, along with other members of the track's security staff, they had awaited the arrival of their boss, Hank Rhon, from his house in San Diego. After the hearing, Medina was locked up in the municipal jail under a round-the-clock guard to await trial in a state court. No one imagined that the process would prove to be swift or easy. One of two lawyers assigned to defend him told reporters that his client was innocent and had been tortured into confessing to something he hadn't done.

The Mexican legal process is a cumbersome, often confusing affair, which depends mostly on written rather than oral testimony and moves ponderously forward on a tidal sludge of paper. Everything has to be written down, and procedure is based on complicated legal subtleties that occasionally contradict each other. Also, unlike American law, which is rooted in the assumption that a person is innocent until he is proved guilty, Mexican jurisprudence rests on an ancient structure of Spanish codes which has been built up over centuries and assumes that a person is guilty. "It means that the evidence is basically against you until you can be determined to be innocent of the allegations, and that most of the court process is handled differently," an American consular official in Tijuana explained recently to a reporter. "For instance, a defender of some kind comes forward. The prisoner comes forward only during strategic parts of the process. The defender speaks on his behalf. It is a much more private kind of case. It is certainly *not* before a jury, or anything of that sort." Ultimately, the outcome depends on delicate negotiations that begin at the time of the

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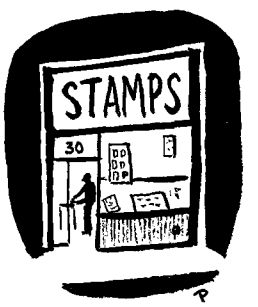
arraignment and continue throughout the trial itself. Much emphasis is put on so-called *careos*—face-to-face confrontations in the courtroom between accused and accusers, in which the defendant has the right to challenge directly the testimony against him.

Since there is no jury, the presiding judge is the only person who can rule on guilt or innocence, and the power of the judiciary as a whole is enormous. In Mexico, unfortunately, magistrates are underpaid, and have a reputation for being easily manipulated. (The average pay of a state magistrate is the equivalent of about fifteen hundred dollars a month, and some magistrates, like some journalists, take second jobs in order to make ends meet.) According to Alan Riding, the author of "Distant Neighbors," a detailed study of Mexican society, the judiciary "rarely provides justice," and, in some cases, "money can buy innocence and freedom unless politics or publicity interferes."

It was anticipated in Tijuana that the case against Medina would proceed at a glacial pace, but most people also assumed that it would continue to inch ahead. Judge Felizardo Ruiz, a small, slender, gray-haired man who chain-smoked cigarettes and sipped Coca-Colas during the endless typing, reading, and taking of testimony in his small, stuffy courtroom, was to hear the case, and no one imagined that he would want to rush to judgment. It was felt that the amount of exposure being given to the matter, with reporters and photographers constantly in attendance, would guarantee the integrity of the process while the police continued to investigate. Governor Leyva had offered a reward of a hundred million pesos (about forty-three thousand dollars) for information leading to a solution of the crime and the apprehension of the killer or killers.

About two weeks after the murder, however, the state attorney general, Roberto Morales Grajales, suddenly announced that the investigation was over. The police had identified the two suspects, one of whom had confessed, and had demonstrated a plausible motive for the crime. Medina and Vera Palestina were "the material as well as the intellectual assassins," he announced from his office, in Mexicali, and so there was no reason to prolong a costly and time-consuming search. "The case has been solved," he said. The reward was paid to Gustavo Romero Meza for his "brilliant and speedy solution" of the crime.

Many people in Tijuana reacted with disbelief, and they soon made their feelings known through phone calls to local radio stations and letters to newspapers, and in interviews. "It is an absurdity," one man told a reporter. "They want us to accept these two goons as the murderers when they have not even questioned the man who employs them, and who had the strongest reason for wishing Gato eliminated. It would be a comedy if it were not for the reality of a man shot down in the street." Blancornelas described himself as appalled by the attorney general's conclusion. "He is contradicting the Governor, who said that the capture of the killers would mean we live in a state of laws," he said. "But we do not live in a state of laws, because the investigation has been cut short."



While the authorities immediately began to act as if the crime had indeed been solved, the public and the independent press continued to express skepticism and ask questions. In an open letter addressed to President de la Madrid, his attorney general, Governor Leyva, and State Attorney General Morales, fifty-four local journalists listed fifteen unanswered questions concerning the case, most of them involving Hank Rhon and aspects of the operation of the Agua Caliente Racetrack. One question went: "For what reason has there been no determination regarding the relations that existed between Héctor (Gato) Félix and the director of the Caliente Racetrack, principally Engineer Jorge Hank Rhon and Dr. Alberto Murguía, who are the persons mentioned most insistently in his last published writings?" And in a poll in which more than twenty-three hundred people were asked who they thought had ordered the killing of Félix eight hundred and ninety-four named Hank Rhon as the principal suspect, with the Governor running a poor second and the PRI third.

By this time, *Zeta* had challenged and then contradicted the police version of the shooting, in which Medina was said to have acted as the trigger man. Blancornelas had dispatched reporters to the scene, sifted through all the testimony, examined the medical evidence, and consulted independent experts. *Zeta's* conclusion was that Medina had driven the getaway car and that Vera Palestina had almost certainly done the actual shooting, probably from the back of a brown pickup truck. There had been a third man involved, and perhaps a fourth, *Zeta* said, but the murderer must have been Vera, for he was the chief of racetrack security, Hank Rhon's personal bodyguard, and Medina's superior, and, according to witnesses employed at the track, had actually cashed a ten-thousand-dollar voucher on the day of the killing.

Zeta's judgment was soon fiercely seconded by Medina himself. During hearings held toward the end of May, Medina repeated his assertion that he had been tortured by the police into confessing. He claimed that he had spent the morning of April 20th with his family, after he had reported for work at the track at seven-thirty, only to be told that he was not needed until eleven. He said that after he was arrested the state police had blindfolded him and driven him around for a couple of hours, then stripped him and held his head down while pouring salt water up his nose. "I screamed for them to kill me," he said. He said that he was taken back to a substation in Tijuana, where he was beaten, and that mineral water laced with hot chili peppers was poured into his nostrils, whereupon, nearly mad with pain, he signed the confession. "I declare myself innocent," he told Judge Ruiz. "I have nothing more to say."

However, during the first days of the trial itself, in early June, Medina had a great deal more to say. He challenged the testimony of every witness against him, including the state police officers who had secured his signed confession. Then, after a number of witnesses failed to show up for a hearing, the trial was postponed until August 8th, an inexplicably long delay. When it was finally resumed, most of the witnesses, especially those from the state police, turned out to be far less certain of their facts than before. Five officers gave conflicting accounts of the circumstances of Medina's arrest, and few of them could recall the names or the

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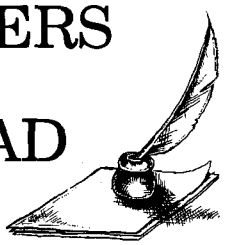

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faces of the people who had testified to the suspect's involvement in the crime. They had difficulty remembering even where and when they had questioned people and how evidence had been obtained. Medina repeated his charge that he had been abused, and his lawyers attempted to secure a release for him, on the ground that he hadn't been properly arraigned, but Judge Ruiz denied the motion, and the trial continued.

As weeks passed with no new revelations or developments in the case, the story disappeared from even the back pages of the city's newspapers. People no longer demonstrated, and journalists ceased to show up at noon outside Fregoso's office to call for justice. Only *Zeta* continued to cover the trial and ask the questions that no one in authority appeared inclined to answer. "I am hoping that when the new government arrives, it will be possible to proceed," Blancornelas said. "The government will be under intense scrutiny."

After Salinas de Gortari, the winner of Mexico's Presidential election last summer, was formally installed in office, on December 1st, some dramatic changes began to take place in Baja. Governor Leyva, a political enemy of Salinas, was forced out and replaced by a Salinas ally, Oscar Baylón Chacon. Leyva was first sent to fill a minor diplomatic post in Washington, then was dispatched to the Mexican Embassy in Lisbon as a cultural attaché—moves dictated, observers say, by a desire to remove him from the scene. A number of his appointed officials have since been fired, and several have been arrested and charged with various forms of corruption. Among the minor casualties of this extensive changeover has been the Félix case, which had to be suspended again, because Judge Ruiz was replaced by another judge, Braulio Gómez Verónica, and he had to start from scratch. The trial was finally resumed this past January, and it ended in April, to await the judge's verdict and sentence. That could take as long as a year. The case itself will remain open, if only because Vera Palestina is still at large.

"The killing of Félix will become another in the long list of unsolved crimes," a local reporter says.

But if Blancornelas can do anything about it, that will not happen. Every week, he has continued to write in *Zeta*, about the murder of his friend and to list the five people, including Hank Rhon, whom he considers the principal suspects. The circulation of the newspaper, stimulated by its fearless accounts of the case and its continued freewheeling coverage of the local scene, has risen to an average of eighty thousand copies a week. Every issue carries a reprint of one of Gato's columns and also a full-page spread in which the columnist calls out from the grave for justice. "Hank, why did one of your bodyguards kill me?" he asks, before turning to the former Governor. "Xico, even though you'll be in Spain or Portugal, who ordered my killing?" he says. "Baylón, why don't you order the arrest of the one you know killed me?" he asks.

Blancornelas does not consider himself a hero, but he is aware of the risk he is taking. "If I publish the names of the five suspects every week, then if something happens to me the list of the suspects is right there," he recently told a friend. "God gave me life. He will take my life when He wants, not when the politicians want. I feel like a torero. After I finish a story and it's being edited and being printed, I'm afraid. But when it's out and many people have read it, the fear is gone."

—WILLIAM MURRAY

• •

THESE FRIENDS

Crickets' insistence and the low, late sun
remind companions they need each other.
Before she can call, he leaves his rounds
of lairs and hollow logs. Assuring a cottontail
her young are not to his taste, he sidles down
through dune grass, arrives doing his dance step.
Dog and woman take supper on the pier
while all meaning gathers in one color.
Day ends—swans whistling above, the mirror
beneath, and these friends leaning together.

—RHEA L. COHEN

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Magic Mirrors

SCIENCE fiction has played small part in my reading, but a composer's choice of subject sometimes directs listeners toward books that might otherwise remain unread, and lately more than one opera composer in quest of a libretto has been attracted to science fiction. Tod Machover's "Valis," based on Philip K. Dick's novel of that title, appeared in Paris in 1987, had two semistaged performances last month at M.I.T., and has been recorded on Bridge. Philip Glass's "The Making of the Representative for Planet 8," based on Doris Lessing's novel of that title, the fourth of her "Canopus in Argos" cycle, was performed last year in Houston and London. Sylvano Bussotti's "L'Ispirazione," brought out at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino last year, invested an Ernst Bloch tale of eighteenth-century musicians with a science-fiction setting. Anthony Davis's "Under the Double Moon," based on an unpublished science-fiction tale by Deborah Atherton, was given its première last month by the Opera Theatre of St. Louis. Michael Tippett's "New Year," set partly in "Nowhere and Tomorrow," is due in Houston in October. Before them, there was Karl-Birger Blomdahl's "Aniara," performed in Stockholm in 1959 and then at the Edinburgh Festival and at Covent Garden.

A trend? I am not sure. Any examination of those works, and of others with similar elements, suggests that opera composers are turning to science fiction for reasons as diverse as those for which they have turned, more often, to myth, to history, to tales, romances, and dramas of the past. There are no easy generalizations to be made. But one recurrent feature is the association of electronic music's "unnatural" timbres with the supernatural or with the working of wondrous scientific machines. Busoni commended opera plots that (unlike "La Tosca," except during the cantata) make music "indispensable on the stage"—plots that include "dances, marches, songs, and . . . the appearance of the supernatural." He praised Verdi for including in "Otello" "a drinking song, a mandolin solo, an evening prayer, and a romance (that of the willow)"; because of them, he declared, " 'Otello' becomes almost an opera." His is a partial view of opera, easily argued against. Insofar as it has validity, it can, by extension, in science fictions motivate the interventions of electronic music. (In similar fashion, Thea Musgrave, in "The Voice of Ariadne," employed electronic sounds for the otherworldly song of the abandoned princess crying across the ages to a living character. In "The Mask of Orpheus," Harrison Birtwistle employed them for the Voice of Apollo and for six short "tales" that cut into the drama while the main action freezes.) And perhaps there is also an increasing acceptance of Busoni's more general pronouncement that "the opera should take possession of the supernatural or unnatural as its only proper sphere of representation and feeling, and should create a pretense world in such a way that life is reflected in either a magic or a comic mirror, presenting consciously that which is not to be found in real life." Science-fiction apparatus is not essential, of course, for fantasy: too much beer proved enough to send Janáček's Mr. Brouček space-travelling to the moon and time-travelling back to the fifteenth century.

"ANIARA" is set aboard a spaceship—an immense ferry, carrying refugees from Earth—that goes irreparably off course. Divorced from familiar associations of time and place, the passengers live out their lives. Strange cults arise. In this respect, the plot has kinship with island plots such as those of Rose Macaulay's "Orphan Island" and William Golding's "Lord of the Flies," but the setting, at once more exotic and more oppressive, gives Blomdahl a natural chance to write "music of the future"—mysterious electronic sounds from a wounded computer, which can no longer control the vessel, and which expires after relaying, in a last, sad song, an account of Earth's destruction. In that respect, the plot links with other last-survivors-of-a-catastrophe, last-representatives-of-the-race fantasies. Blomdahl called his opera "a revue of man in time and space." His score includes jazzy numbers and a lyrical tenor aria likening the vessel's tremendous journey to the infinitesimal shifting, over millennia, of a tiny bubble within a piece of glass.

In an introduction to "New Year," the libretto and vocal score of which have been published, Tippett says, "This is not a sci-fi opera. Everyone involved is human on some level; there are no robots." But there is a time-travelling spaceship, and the action turns on an encounter between the soprano Jo Ann, "a trainee children's doctor" in this world, and the tenor Pelegrin, a space pilot "from Nowhere and Tomorrow." Electronic episodes are associated with the spaceship and with a mystic sweet fountain (of forgetfulness) and bittersweet lake (of remembrance) to which Pelegrin transports Jo Ann; there, like Strauss's empress without a shadow, she is invited to choose and drink. Comment must wait until the music has been heard, but it is already evident that Tippett, his own librettist, has used "magical" science-fiction elements, as in "The Midsummer Marriage" he used "magical" enactments of Jungian symbolism, to provide theatrical representations of psychological adventure and development.

I SHIRKED attendance at "The Representative." Lessing's novel, telling of a kind of reversed, enforced phylogeny—the personalities, memories, experiences of the inhabitants of a doomed planet gathered into the person destined as its single survivor—seemed musically promising, but by all accounts Glass's music did less than justice to the subject. Phylogeny also plays a part in Dick's "Valis"; it is proposed as one explanation of Horselover Fat's knowledge, after a theophanic visitation, of things he cannot by life's ordinary rules have known. Dick himself, it seems, experienced such a theophany (it manifested itself as an irruption of pink light), and "Valis" was his attempt to come to terms with it. He

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divides himself into Phil, a comparatively rational narrator, and Fat, who is assumed by his friends to have gone mad. The first half of the novel is realistic, set in an Orange County of the seventies among people whose lives include drugs, mystic speculation about time, space, and the world (reality or illusion?), and identification of Richard Nixon with the Antichrist. The overtly supernatural enters when Fat, Phil, and their friends see the movie "Valis" (its title an acronym for "Vast Active Living Intelligence System"), which has been made by a rock pair, Linda and Eric Lampton, and the musician Mini. The movie's uncanny correspondence with details of Fat's theophany persuades his friends that he is not mad after all. By exchanging a mystically revealed password, "KING FELIX," they make contact with the rock group (who claim to be the builders from another world who once built for Akhenaton) and meet the two-year-old Sophia (who may be the latest incarnation of the Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Muhammad, etc., or merely a hologram contrived and controlled by Mini). Young Hagia Sophia preaches to them in terms that mingle Old Testament prophecy with the Sermon on the Mount. Phil and Fat become one person for a while. O'erpressed by Mini's lasers, Sophia expires. Fat sets out again on his quest for the living Saviour, and is on his way to Micronesia when last we hear of him; back in Orange County, Phil, watching television, sees an ad for a "Food KING" chain followed by a "FELIX the Cat" cartoon, and wonders whether VALIS is back in action, sending messages.

Anyone impatient of mystical mumbo-jumbo—visitations from Sirius (whence Karlheinz Stockhausen believes he came), present-day application of prophecies from Revelations or by the Cumaean Sibyl, Hermes Trismegistus, the Rosicrucians—and generally impatient of unclear, poppy-blurred, or lotos-lazy speculation has a hard time at first with Dick's "Valis." (The narrator of his later novel "The Transmigration of Timothy Archer" remarks, early on, "Only in the Bay Area, I thought, would this nonsense be tolerated.") I wonder what Edward Hussey, the Oxford classical scholar oft cited in "Valis" as an authority, makes of it all. But Dick has a sense of humor along with a keen sense of his muddlepot characters' puzzlements and pain, and does not ask for a reader's acceptance of more than that *they* believe such stuff. The novel soon grips one. And it is perhaps no bad thing to be reminded of mysteries that others do wrestle with.

Machover's "Valis" opera omits the messiness, pares things down to a few crucial scenes, uses music to portray the theophanic crisis and some of its consequences. The opera was commissioned by IRCAM to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Pompidou Center and was first performed in the vast Pompidou forum. (György Kurtág was the "technology coördinator.") Machover has since tightened and refined the work, which now lasts about seventy-eight minutes. It calls for seven singers and two instrumentalists (piano and percussion), along with tapes and electronic manipulations; the conductor takes on the role of Mini. After a preliminary sampling of "Valis," I resisted it for a while. There were prejudices to overcome: against the subject, against insistent rock music (the Lamptons' song), against synthetic sound (clouds of shimmering sweetness over long pedals, in Sophia's sermon), against repetitiveness (the long, long passacaglia that forms the finale). But other works of Machover bade me trust him—a student of Roger Sessions and Elliott Carter, and later the director of musical research at Boulez's IRCAM. So I took the plunge—read the book, borrowed the score, listened to the record—and discovered that "Valis" is one of the brightest and most intelligent of new American operas. There is no monotony or meagreness of sound. The score is cast in numbers that build into two well-shaped, carefully paced acts. There are cross-references; there is variety of tempo, texture, tone, and intensity. A full production is being planned, to open in Tokyo next season and then travel to Los Angeles, New York, and Boston.

The Bridge performance is accomplished. Patrick Mason is eloquent as Phil and Fat. Anne Azéma is a pure and accurate Sophia. Terry Edwards as Dr. Stone—a psychiatrist who gives Fat the "Tao Te Ching" to read—produces long, steady deep notes with Sarastro-like grandeur. Mary King and Daryl Runswick glitter as the Lamptons. Janice Felty does well by what the narrator describes as "the most beautiful song I ever heard." (In the novel, it is heard from a dream Linda Ronstadt.) Thomas Bogdan is the soloist of a number where "Parsifal" material recurrent in both the novel and the opera comes into the clear. Emma Stephenson is the pianist, Daniel Ciampolini the percussionist; the composer conducts.

"UNDER THE DOUBLE MOON," Anthony Davis's second opera, is a simpler and more conventional affair, and after his powerful "Malcolm X" is a disappointment. On Undine, a planet mostly ocean, a pair of twins, brother and sister, exhibit psychic powers. They learn that their real father is not the rude fisherman they have called Father but one of the Gaxulta, "people who have chosen the quite painful physical change required to become the people of the sea," who "transform themselves into streamlined, brightly scaled amphibians, using THE WAY, a discipline of the mind which can affect physical reality," and who "live an unstructured contemplative life in the ocean in small communities, and learn to cultivate and control the gifts treated so censoriously on land." The twins have been bred to be useful agents of a distant Empress; an inspector comes to summon them, tempting them with glittering "passports"—glowing crystal globes—that will enable them to range the galaxy. But their parents have decided to serve the Empress no longer; their mother chooses to turn into a Gaxulta, and she disappears with her lover into the sea. When the inspector tries to claim the twins, the waves overwhelm him. His bright passports float back to the surface, and the twins, seizing them, consider their future.

As an allegory of ambition, adventure, and conformity versus "unstructured contemplative life . . . in small communities" (the closing words of the opera suggest that the twins choose the former), this might have passed muster had it been worked out with more skill and imagination. The opera underwent a two-week "workshop" at the O'Neill Theatre Center last year, where Joe Masteroff, Conrad Susa, Lloyd Richards, Robert Ward, Daniel Selznick, and Kelly Robinson were "script/music editors." After experience of similar workshops, I have mixed feelings about them. (They evi-

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dently lack euthanasic powers.) Obviously, prentice opera composers can benefit from veteran advice, but a committee barrage of recommendation may confuse a creator, dull whatever bright belief first drew him to a subject, or make him stubbornly resistant to wise as well as foolish counsel. Most successful opera composers have discussed and tested their work before just two or three trusted, trustworthy advisers. "Under the Double Moon" was not as dreary as Edward Thomas's "Desire Under the Elms," another product of the O'Neill process, but as music-drama it was almost as inept. All the episodes were given much the same weight and emphasis, most people sang in much the same manner, and the final syllable of phrase after phrase (even of phrases ending in such words as "questioning," "listened," "secrets") was long sustained—a mannerism that drained vitality from the declamation.

Ai-Lan Zhu and Eugene Perry were the twins, Cynthia Clarey and Jake Gardner their parents. Thomas Young and John Duykers sang the inspector and the fisherman in unpleasant but forceful tenors. Rhoda Levine, who had been a "creative consultant" for the piece, staged it in a plain, flat manner, in plain décor by Marie Anne Chiment. William McGlaughlin conducted.

IT was not a vintage year for St. Louis, which usually offers an exciting season. "Werther" and "The Merry Widow" were the standard operas. Colin Graham remounted the potpourri based on the Purcell-Dryden "King Arthur" which he had devised for the English Opera Group in 1970. I was unhappy about it then; Curtis Price found it so bizarre that he embarked on the studies that led to his powerful book "Henry Purcell and the London Stage." The original "King Arthur" is not easy to revive; like "The Fairy-Queen," it calls for two casts, one of actors and one of singers, along with dancers, fine-tuned period instrumentalists, and a stage designer adept at spectacular transformations. Only two characters, an airy and an earthy spirit, both sing and speak. The works are today compassable perhaps only at conservatories where several performing disciplines are practiced or by festival coalitions. (This month, Les Arts Florissants, the Peter Hall Theatre Company, and the Compagnie Ris et Danceries joined forces to present a "Fairy-Queen" at the Aix Festival.) In a defensive program essay Mr. Graham claimed, fairly enough, that he had saved many pages of fine Purcell theatre music for a nonspecialist modern stage. But he saved them at high cost. He scrapped some of the "King Arthur" music: cuts included the whole of the sacrifice scene, Purcell's first sequence; part of the frost scene; and a good deal of the final patriotic masque. He assigned much of the rest to characters for whom it was not composed. He added Purcell theatre songs from six different plays, pieces from song collections, and numbers from "Dioclesian" and from "The Tempest" (which is no longer attributed to Purcell).

Well, it is all music worth hearing, and the Graham piece is both skillfully concocted and practicable. There is a long history of adapting works of the past to match the presumed tastes of a contemporary public: in the early nineteenth century, Sir Henry Bishop worked over "Figaro," "Don Giovanni," and many another opera for Covent Garden. Wagner updated Gluck's "Iphigénie en Aulide" in 1847. I first heard "La Clemenza di Tito," at Salzburg in 1949, in a *Bearbeitung* pepped up with numbers from "Idomeneo." Such endeavors can be useful in their time, but they date swiftly. Today's public may be more surely captured—the success of the Arts Florissants "Atys," of Peter Sellars' uncut "Orlando" and "Giulio Cesare" suggests as much—by performances undertaken in the belief that great scores of the past needing revival do not call for a "*Mêlons! Coupons!*" treatment. Mr. Graham's "King Arthur" did not move as a convincing drama. How could it, when the characters were singing songs from "Bonduca," "The Libertine," "The Married Beau"? Moreover, two decades of busy enterprise have prompted both new ways of performing seventeenth-century music and a readier response to theatrical conventions once contemned. The St. Louis cast, led by Sylvia McNair, Kurt Ollmann, and Carl Halvorson, as Graham's Emmeline, Arthur, and Oswald, and conducted by Stephen Lord, was proficient. But by standards of 1989 the production seemed a somewhat old-fashioned affair—a high-spirited reconstruction of an earlier generation's approach to Purcell. —ANDREW PORTER

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DANCING

Wise Guys

THOUGH I don't like the work of William Forsythe, I think I understand why other people do. What I don't understand is how some of the same people who claim to be excited by Forsythe also say they're excited by Mark Morris. Morris makes dances, and Forsythe makes aerobics classes gussied up with ballet terminology. I assume that the people who link the two names are thinking not of Forsythe the choreographer but of Forsythe the director, philosopher, and social commentator. This Forsythe produces violent, long-winded theatre pieces that as performed by the Frankfurt Ballet have proved to be a major drawing card of the Pepsico Summerfare arts festival. "Artifact" was presented there two years ago, and this summer it was "Impressing the Czar." I can see where some of the preoccupations expressed in these pieces—high culture vs. pop, sex war, growing up absurd—may intersect with concerns being voiced by rock groups and performance artists, and maybe even by a few standup comedians. But Forsythe's disingenuous tone puts me off, and his sadism—his addiction to overamplified sounds and loud, domineering female voices in particular—puts me *way* off.

Forsythe's pieces are presented as self-referential enigmas, yet they aren't as well made as they look. "Impressing the Czar" includes numerous instances of well-dressed people stabbing themselves or each other with little gold arrows. The stabbings don't add up to anything—they're just part of a generalized climate of violence, a way of giving the audience a hit. When various elements do add up, it may be because we've added them up before, in movies like "Last Year in Marienbad" and "Lord of the Flies." The setting for the violence is Western civilization—snatches of Beethoven, Old Master paintings, ancient theatre drops, and that weary old surrealist symbol a chessboard. "Impressing the Czar" also includes the twenty-five-minute dance number, "In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated," that was booed when it was presented last summer at the Met by the Paris Opera Ballet. Seeing it in context in no way alleviated the gloom, monotony, and harshness of the dancing; however, it did reveal that what I had taken to be Sylvie Guillem's latest radical-chic wig is really a hair style shared by a gang of tomboy schoolgirls who populate the piece. In their middies and knee socks, these "schoolgirls" (who were mostly boys, and whom the audience adored) did a long mock-primitive circle dance to a 4/4 beat. It seemed to me at the time that the suggestion of atavism would have been stronger if "In the Middle" hadn't also been set in 4/4. Now I think that quite probably Forsythe meant to imply a connection between the two dance sequences. But our ear doesn't tell us that one 4/4 number corresponds to another—it tells us that this is the only rhythm Forsythe knows. One boring rhythm and one little hairdo just don't make an analogy.

The media may find it convenient to link two American choreographers who have attracted more attention than all the others of their generation combined, and who direct companies attached to opera houses in Europe. But Forsythe and Morris are as far apart as two choreographers of their generation can be. Morris comes from, and maintains a formal connection to, mainstream modern dance, yet ideologically he's a classicist. Forsythe's background is ballet, yet his work is postmodernistic art-about-art or art-about-kitsch recycled from the sixties. People who see him as a ballet rebel miss his unreconstructed McLuhanism, which connects him more logically to Cunningham than to Balanchine. ("You gotta look at video," Forsythe recently told the Los Angeles *Times*. "You gotta look at TV.")

Forsythe and Morris have rearranged the ideological circuitry of dance. But that's not why they polarize critical opinion. I'm not even sure that it's a matter of taste. It's true that if you respond to one you almost can't respond to the other, or can't respond deeply enough to write perceptively. (The fence-straddlers include some critics, but the reviews they write betray them. They usually begin by referring to the Other as a "bad boy" or a "would-be enfant terrible.") But having a preference for Morris's or Forsythe's work isn't enough for a critic to base an argument on. Somehow, there must also be a clear sense of what that preference means to the future of the art. The feeling that dance had just about used itself up—that it would suffocate if someone didn't give it oxygen—started spreading a few years ago. It went beyond the people who normally concern themselves with such matters and into the formless world of media sensation, where there is no emergency, only opportunity; and now the public's awareness of the two most talked-about choreographers of the eighties is flowing back on us, bringing with it a load of intrusive details and exerting an almost intolerable pressure on judgment. We know too much about these two guys—about the statements they've made in interviews, about the scandals they've kicked up (both have been booed by their constituencies)—and that knowledge seeps into our consciousness when we're in the theatre, watching the stage. The fact is that more writing is done about the controversiality of the work than about the work itself. And the inflammatory reputations that both Morris and Forsythe have acquired are still the main thing that the public knows about them.

Having an inflammatory reputation helps Forsythe more than it does Morris, even though Morris often behaves as if he wanted nothing better. Controversy hurts him, because it gets between him and his audience. These men are not just poles apart in their work; they're different in the way they view themselves and handle themselves publicly. Forsythe is cool—diffident but wary; he does well with the critics, because he's one himself, a dance intellectual who interests himself in theories about art and dance and the history of both and the cultural conditioning of the audience. Morris is provocative

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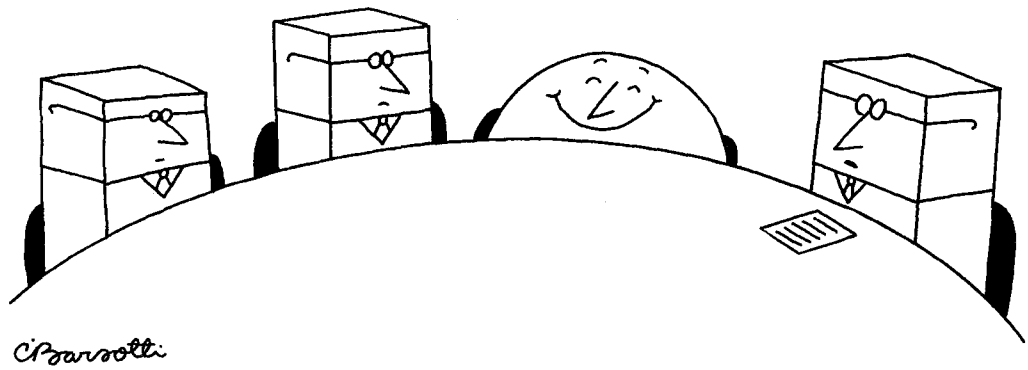
and unguarded; he says things to reporters that get him in trouble, and he poses in the nude for *Vanity Fair*. Forsythe is great at disarming critics who find meanings in his work; he leaves the impression that meanings arise by pure accident—he himself never intended a thing. About *his* intentions Morris is passionately outspoken; a review is right or (more often) it's wrong. Morris can get red-eyed in his own defense. When Forsythe is on the defensive, his diffidence becomes aggressive. At a meeting of the Dance Critics Association earlier this summer, he mumbled so that he couldn't be heard even after his mike was adjusted twice.



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• •

Choreographers have been celebrities before without its affecting our impression of them as artists. Twyla Tharp at her most Hollywood-egregious, Karole Armitage at her most clamorous were still allowed to present work for inspection on its own terms. If Armitage's discipline as an artist had matched her P.R. instinct, she'd have become a cult. Certainly Armitage, whose assaults on the art Forsythe seems to have taken up, set the present tone with her hip personal style and college-educated talk. Forsythe's pieces are typically ten-ton collages that blitz the audience sonically and visually with the steady might of a rock concert, but because his stance is that of the disinterested artist people see his work as "the way things are"—chaotic and abrasive, just like modern life. Morris's flamboyance is seized upon and projected back into his work. *His* meanings, clear and complete in themselves, are resisted in favor of tendentious interpretations involving the man, particularly in regard to his homosexuality, about which he makes no bones. He is suspected of putting on camp theatrics; feminists accuse him both of denigrating women and of wanting to usurp their role in dance. But even in the pieces in which Morris seems to express a homosexual point of view (roughly one-eighth of his total output) he treats women with more respect than Forsythe does. In Boston this spring, the Dance Umbrella presented Morris's "Dido and Aeneas"—the opera staged as dance, with singers stationed in a box. Morris himself took the role of Dido, with fastidious Oriental tact. In the compound stylization of the production, the impersonation found a place; dance, song, ritual enactment all blended against a severe black-blue-and-white décor. In the last scene, Morris lay on his bier while one after another of Dido's attendants walked to the backcloth—a sea-blue map of the Mediterranean—and disappeared through a slit. Whether you noticed a venereal image or not, the opera was already a meditation on sex and death; and if you wanted to think about AIDS, it was there. As usual, Morris had spread a complex meaning before us and withdrawn without comment.

Morris is not an intellectual; he's just opinionated. But he does nothing *in the work* to help us draw conclusions about it—he doesn't tell us what to think. Forsythe always has to outsmart his audience. The response we're supposed to have to him and his work is right there in the work itself—Forsythe has anticipated it. If we feel hostile, he lets us know he expects hostility. Not that he takes responsibility for provoking us, as an artist would; he's only interested in defusing a rebellion that threatens his total control of the audience. Whatever we think, it fits in with his plans, and whatever we do—boo, write a review, compare him to Mozart—we do in response to a cue from him. Other postmodernists have worked manipulatively. Coming, as they do, at the tail end of a dazzling era, they can hardly help feeling self-conscious or wanting to take the audience into their confidence. But Forsythe is such a control freak that he thinks he can read the audience's mind. At some point in an evening, a moment comes when one of his mouthpieces gives voice to our befuddlement. In "Impressing the Czar," it's the stentorian Kathleen Fitzgerald who tells the czars what we might be wondering. "Is it perhaps a metaphor? I think not. Then does it suggest a current trend? Let us hope not! Is it a Teutonic puzzle? *Nein* . . ."

With a Forsythe piece, we are forced to deal in seemingly unrelated phenomena and to make up Rorschachian meanings. With Morris, the eye, ear, and brain are presented with stimuli whose relatedness stems from the sense they have already made to Morris. He doesn't give us "meanings" any more than Forsythe does; he does give us a logical structure from which to infer the nature of the work and "solve" its mystery. This mystery is contained in whatever possessed him to make the work in the first place—it's something no artist ever knows. (One reason Morris gets so impatient with "wrong" reviews may be that they distract him from clues he's still in the process of figuring out himself.) Forsythe's whole point is that seemingly related things are unrelated; randomness rules, irony is all, any interpretation fits. Morris suggests that seemingly related things may in fact be related, even if he doesn't quite know how; the world is not made up of multiple cheating surfaces, like a mirror maze, and we are not fools trying to find our way around in it.

Forsythe and Morris have one big thing in common. Each could play a substantial role in the cultural drama

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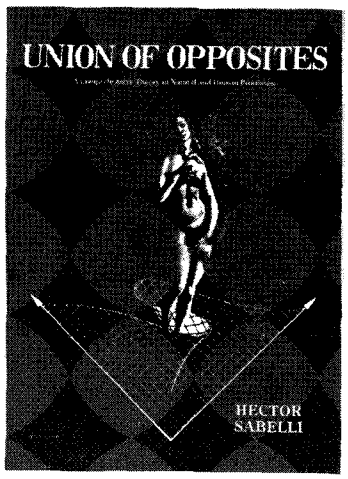

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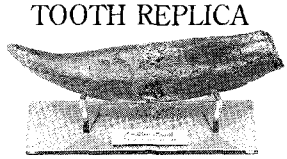

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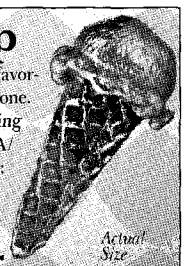

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that has been going on since the sixties called "The Rise of the Brat in Art." But whereas Forsythe is a brat with artistic pretensions, Morris is an artist with a bratty streak. (He was not only Dido, he was the Sorceress—Dido's nemesis. As if realizing that he might not get away with it, Morris burlesqued the part, creating a monster of derision, who at one point, in full view of the audience, lay down and very quickly and deftly masturbated.) If Forsythe is busy reviving the pop aesthetic of the sixties, Morris burns a flame to the sexual freedom of that era. When he was booed in Brussels last spring, it was for "Striptease," a daring and bitter parody of the real thing, in which he just may have overestimated the sophistication of the audience. "Striptease" is part of a trilogy based on essays by Roland Barthes. It's the kind of "intellectual" evening, unique among Morris's works, that Forsythe might very well have presented himself. It's amusing that such coincidences exist, but not terribly instructive. The creative resources of dance have been greater in the past; they've never been many. Despite Diaghilev, dance in the twentieth century had a later flowering than music or painting, and began its decline later. And while it dwindles away, the dance scene only becomes bigger and more visible.

AS Ali in "Le Corsaire," Farukh Ruzimatov slinks about in harem pants, his abdomen thrust forward, his hips and shoulders back. There is a light powdering of glitter dust on his torso catching the light as he poses, fingertips pressed to his chest, elbows angled like cup handles. He holds the pose as he falls to his knees before Medora, a Greek maiden; he holds it hurtling into a double tour en l'air. It is Ali who performs the male solo we know from the excerpted pas de deux, although in the complete ballet as performed by the Kirov the pas de deux is a pas de trois, and Ali is not the hero; Conrad, the titular Corsair, partners Medora and supports her in the final pose as Ali flings himself to the ground at their feet. Billed as the hero's friend, Ali is plainly his slave, and he steals all the scenes, or is meant to. When the opening-night cast took its bows at the Met, out came the Conrad, Yevgeni Neff; the Medora, Altynai Asylmuratova; and the two supporting leads, Yelena Pankova and Konstantin Zaklinsky; and then, in splendid isolation, Ruzimatov ran out to the roar of the crowd.

All according to plan. But in fact Ruzimatov isn't the star he's being cracked up to be. With his long legs, and his flowing black hair held back with a headband, he cut a fine figure. But he didn't have quite enough dance power to fill a role we have seen performed by Rudolf Nureyev and Yuri Soloviev and Mikhail Baryshnikov, not to mention the Americans Paul Russell and Ronald Perry. There was something calculated about his magnificence. Technically, his turnout looked overstrained and undersupported. A few nights later, he danced Albrecht in "Giselle"—a classical role. The low belly and the high retracted hips, so eccentrically right in "Le Corsaire," were a constant amazement here. Some spins in attitude with the knee held parallel to the floor disguised the problem; some double air turns in passé did not. And the insular air appropriate to Ali was an unwarranted affectation in Albrecht. Ruzimatov behaved not as if there were no one in Albrecht's world except Albrecht but as if there were no one on the stage except Ruzimatov. His Giselle, the greatly talented Zhanna Ayupova, managed well without him, but it was a struggle.

The Kirov, most illustrious of Russia's dance companies, had not been seen here since 1964. Its name is associated with tragedy and repression; it has suffered more defections than the Bolshoi, and most of those have been by male dancers. I suppose it was to assure us that the Nureyev style is still alive that the company gave us Ruzimatov in prominent roles during its first week. And it gave male dancing a lavish showcase in "Battleship Potemkin," the latest ballet choreographed by the artistic director, Oleg Vinogradov. As Russian sailors of 1905 (the ballet is based on the same mutiny that inspired Eisenstein's film), the Kirov men danced effectively. But the turgid music (by Alexander Tchaikovsky), the plodding scenario, and the cartoonish characterizations of officers and aristocrats made it hard to see the ballet as much more than the Kirov's point-by-point answer to the Bolshoi's "Spartacus." There were thirty-two sailors on the stage—heroes all. The whole thing, which could have done with a little Ruzimatov-type subversion, lasted over

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an hour. At the end, the men ran across the orchestra pit and up the aisle, shouting—victory was theirs. Vinogradov carried out a monumental task with firm control of logistics, and he never failed to distinguish one drill, parade, lineup, or conspiratorial group from another. The show moved weightily but clearly. A pity it had to keep stopping so that Death could dance a pas de deux with his latest victim. These episodes were the only amateurish thing about the production.

The "Giselle" is a slightly different version from the one I saw in Paris seven years ago. The first act is less rickety, but some of the fine detail in the second-act corps dances has been smoothed away. "Giselle" is a Kirov ballerina's best vehicle; it was given twice. In the other performance, Asylmuratova danced, partnered by Zaklinsky. Her first act was marred by a fixed smile and a tendency to mime mechanically, on the beat. In the graveyard scene, it was wonderful how she could luxuriate in the sweep of a phrase or the shape of a step (those soubresauts!) and still convey dramatic urgency. But the performance broke up into "highlights." You didn't feel the almost impersonal compulsion that carries Albrecht to safety and that marks a great Giselle.

A season that was expected to revolve around dance personalities hasn't panned out that way. "Le Corsaire," a Petipa revival with more exotic color than dancing, was not riveting. But with alternate casting in five major and three minor roles it introduced to New York a bevy of gifted dancers, none of whom in subsequent appearances can be said to have ignited the kind of excitement a season like this needs. Asylmuratova, on whom the highest hopes were pinned, so far hasn't matched that one "Giselle." She has shown us glamour and authority, but not radiance. Ayupova at twenty-two is already a ballerina. She was a modest, succinct, fleet Giselle, and as a Wili lieutenant in Asylmuratova's performance she sent a vibration through the house.

The music all season has been under a plague. Kirov dancers like to impose their own tempi, and, as if the erratic, choppy phrasing weren't bad enough, Viktor Fedotov and Dzhemal Dalgat are having to conduct a pick-up orchestra from Hell.

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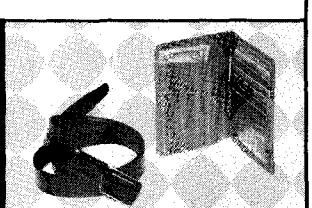

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

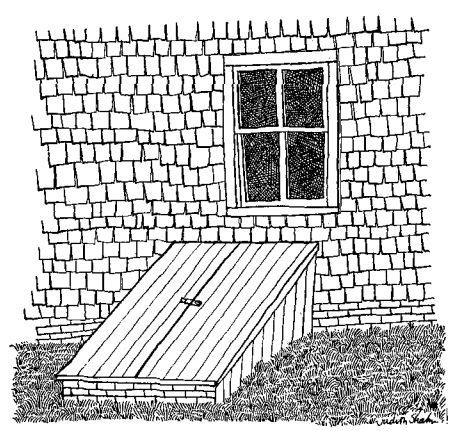
JULY 20

IT is in fact turning out to be the case that, as one of his advisers predicted about three months ago, George Bush's second hundred days in office have been more successful than the first—at least so far. In part by the White House's fine-tuning its machinery, in part by Bush's own and evident increasing confidence, in part by default by the Democrats, and in part by his own willingness to do whatever necessary, Bush, a man without either much natural magnetism or powerful ideas, has become a political force. He may have come to office without much of an agenda (as well as without coattails) and may have been slow to get started in setting out his agenda—so slow that many observers thought it could be fatal—but he dominates the agenda now. He may lack Ronald Reagan's ability to reach the public through television, but he has established himself as a popular leader. His increased confidence has seemed marked in the past few weeks; he comes on stronger, speaks with more authority, seems more self-assured. In turn, the public as well as people here take notice, and treat him with more deference, which increases his aura and, in turn, gives him more confidence. Presidents, like most people, flourish when they are the recipients of approval. In the polls, Bush's approval ratings, as of now, are higher than Reagan's ever were. This could of course be ephemeral. A bad phase in the economy—which we could be approaching—or some other turn in his luck, or a gradual realization on the part of the public of the problems he isn't dealing with, or even the development of some articulate opposition, could change things. There is no strong political force behind Bush; his persona doesn't generate a tremendous unshakable following.

In fact, as the Bush White House knows (but doesn't like to talk about), according to some polling the numbers behind the approval ratings indicate that Bush's support is much wider than it is deep: the percentage of those who give him strong approval is substantially below what it was for Reagan at the same point in his Presidency. (Also, despite Bush's high approval ratings, polls show that a majority of the public believes that the country is moving in the wrong direction.) Reagan could bounce back after a deep recession (when the economy did, too), and survive a political scandal that could have led to impeachment. (The ingredients were there: flouting the constitutional system, a coverup.) We should know, but don't seem to, that a President's real-time popularity may have little to do with his historical standing. A disgruntled conservative activist said to me recently, "Probably the most popular President at the time of his death was Warren Harding."

Up to now, at least, Bush has been helped by external factors: inflation has not got out of bounds, and unemployment has not got out of hand (though both indicators have been watched nervously), and there is no threatening international crisis. The scandals unfolding each day concerning the management of the Department of Housing and Urban Development during the Reagan Administration—the one that came to town to rid the government of "waste, fraud, and abuse"—have not as yet touched Bush. Further, when Bush took office the Reagan Administration was generally deemed successful enough that Bush didn't have to embark on a dramatic change in direction. The Reagan Administration was one of change while Bush's is more one of evolution, proposing nothing very controversial. (This assumes that there is no immediate need to drastically cut the national debt or address the appalling decline in educational standards or the life of children in the inner cities—which in the Presidential campaign Bush said, once, that he was "haunted" by.) Bush comes across to the public as a normal man making moderate proposals and being reasonable.

Bush is also being helped by the



significant change in our political makeup over the last eight years. When Reagan took office, the party identification was fifty-one per cent Democratic to twenty-eight per cent Republican; now, according to some polls, it is nearly even—forty-four per cent Democratic to forty-two per cent Republican. The situation for the Democrats is even grimmer than that: polling done for them indicates that white eighteen-to-twenty-four-year-olds are Republicans by a margin of two to one, and that only twenty-five per cent of all voters under thirty-five consider themselves Democrats; the only age group among which the Democrats have a decisive edge is the elderly. Since, according to the pollsters, partisan views are more important than anything else in affecting the public's perceptions of a President's performance (this figures), the fact that there are now fifty per cent more Republicans than there were at the beginning of Reagan's first term gives Bush a political base that Reagan didn't have.

Moreover, Bush and his people are making canny use of the Presidency, and the possibility has to be considered that the old, familiar premises about what does and does not sustain a Presidency may be outmoded. The increasingly sophisticated techniques of displaying a President, of keeping up to the minute on what is on the public's mind, and of both playing to and manipulating public opinion may have changed the formula for a successful Presidency. The way the White House has developed as an institution—as compared with Congress—has given the Presidency additional power, superiority, in a system that is supposedly built on a balance of power. There is far more coverage of the President than there is of Congress, and what coverage there is of Congress is necessarily diffuse, and unlike the pictures of the President it's rarely scenic. (Much of it is also negative toward the institution itself, and there are always enough members of Congress around who reinforce the stereotypes. According to some Republican polling, for the first time in five years more people disapprove of Congress than approve of it.) If a President offers a proposal, the press will almost always cover it (a member of Congress's introduction of a bill is almost never covered), and the White House staff goes to great lengths to cultivate the press—some-

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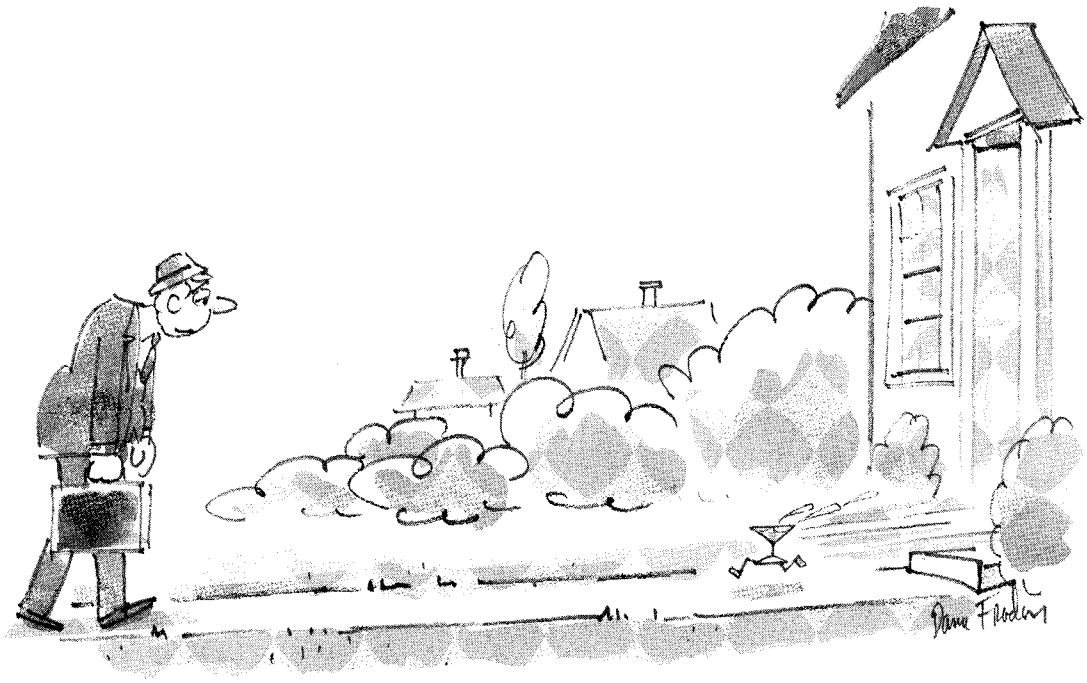

times shamelessly. (A President will do this as well.) The more cynical the people around a President (or Presidential candidate), the more successful the President may be—at least in the here and now. And the more willing the President (or Presidential candidate) is to do nearly anything to succeed, the greater may be his immediate prospects.

The Bush White House has played to the President's strengths, and worked to minimize his vulnerabilities. Bush's strength is in foreign policy, and having just completed his fourth foreign trip he has by this time taken more such trips than any other President during the same period. Most Presidents start out focussing on domestic business. Moreover, a foreign trip is a situation in which a President has a lot of control—over the timing, the substance, the message. (Bush's appearance in Gdansk with Lech Walesa last week was a powerful piece of theatre, and it was obvious, after Bush concluded his speech at the Lenin Shipyard, home of the Solidarity movement, that the pose with Walesa—both men turning their backs to the audience and making a V sign arm in arm—was meant for the cameras.)

To the distress of some Democrats who see what is going on, Bush and his people have done a masterly job of preëmpting much of their agenda, crowding the middle while at the same time keeping the right satisfied enough. A White House aide confirms that there is a conscious effort to co-opt Democratic issues. Bush has, after all, proposed legislation to clean up the air, provide child care, and expand Medicaid; though he has vetoed a bill to raise the minimum wage (as excessive), a number of Democrats think he will end up signing a bill to raise the income of the working poor; he seized the initiative in proposing legislation to change the campaign finance system, and on ethics—both subjects that had become ripe. For the purpose of public relations, which sometimes seems to have become the central purpose of the Presidency, when the President proposes legislation he gets the credit, and it doesn't much matter if Congress makes substantial changes in a bill; when the President signs a bill, he gets the credit—even if he hands out a lot of pens. Bush has also made proposals on crime (once again, before an audience of police officers and families of police who had been killed in the line of duty), a politically potent subject. The budget resolution that the President announced in April—flanked by a bipartisan group from Capitol Hill—was a scam, but it appeared that the President had done something about the budget. (Richard Darman, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, is trying to pull off soon a more serious budget agreement for the next fiscal year.) The President's campaign finance reform proposals are heavily skewed toward helping the Republican Party, but, more serious than that, they miss the point. The two biggest, interrelated, problems in the present system are the ever-increasing amount of money it takes to run for the House or the Senate and the amount of time, and of selling national policy, it takes to raise the money. The President's proposals not only didn't deal with these problems but if enacted could actually make them worse. If Bush continues to hold to such a partisan position, little serious improvement in the system is likely. Still, as a Presidential aide says, by making the proposals the President seized "the high ground."

John Sununu, the President's chief of staff, in an interview I had with him earlier this month, said that the White House was not proceeding any differently in the second hundred days from the way it did in the first; the difference, he said, is that "the press has finally stopped trying to look at things by the old model" and recognizes that Bush wants to do things differently. Bush, he said, "has a complete agenda but was in no haste to throw it all on the table at once." Sununu continued, "Everyone who's an observer or a commentator or a critic wanted us to rush to do everything at once." He added, "Give us credit for having a sense of how to do things. Our template is different—for us it's better, and it's good." Sununu said that at the end of the first six months the domestic agenda would be just about complete, with proposals to come later on helping the disabled and on drugs. As for what had already been proposed he said, "We're satisfied in the way the public is reacting to these things—it shows we're doing what they want."

Bush has chosen a combination of compromise and confrontation with Congress—but mainly he has compromised. This is said to suit his personality, but we have seen in the past that he'll play rough if he has to. As it happens, compromise is better politics. Richard Wirthlin, who was Reagan's pollster and who still polls for the Republican National Committee (which passes the information on to the

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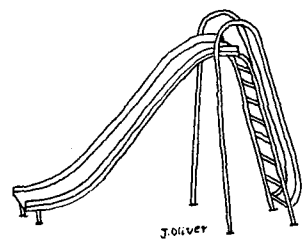
White House), says that people prefer to see bipartisanship and compromise. The rough and tumble, he says, the win-lose circumstances of partisan debate and confrontation, is discomfiting to the public. Wirthlin says, "The techniques of driving the Presidency are much better in displaying strength in compromise than in having the focus on fights, as in the Reagan Presidency." Bush's advisers say that Bush will compromise on many issues but from time to time draw the line, to show that he is no pushover and to keep his conservative wing content. His advisers say that the minimum wage issue is one place where he's drawn the line. The difference between Bush and the Congress is not so great—Congress raised it to $4.55 an hour, thirty cents more than Bush wanted, and shortened the period for a subminimum training wage—but the President's advisers say, and seem to mean it for now, that he won't budge from his proposed figure. The real testing period for Bush in his relationship with Congress is yet to come, when more controversial bills have been passed. The Democrats' disarray, their failure to come up with a coherent program, has been quite helpful to Bush. Because of their own difficulties, he has been spared a number of bruising battles with Congress, in fact has had a freer ride in the first six months than most Presidents.



After a ragged start, the Bush people have come fairly close to where the Reagan people left off in using the panoply of the Presidency to full advantage. There is no maestro on the order of Michael Deaver, Reagan's chief of stagecraft, and the actor Reagan could pull off scenes that the more prosaic Bush might have difficulty with, but there is no question that over eight years the Reagan White House, more than any before it, established the Presidency as theatre, and the Bush White House is trying to follow suit. We have come to expect the theatre, and the Bush White House received much criticism for not being very good at it at first. The theatre, the sophisticated use of Presidential trappings, have become major devices for sustaining a Presidency against the ordinary buffeting of politics. And as William Safire, the New York *Times* columnist, wrote recently, with each Presidency we accept more royalty. The Bush people didn't have to start from scratch. A former Deaver deputy, Steve Studdert, is now in charge of the advance work for Presidential appearances. A number of people around Bush saw the Reagan Presidency up close—and so, of course, did Bush.

Recently, Bush's people have got much better at milking the most out of a Presidential proposal by placing him against a striking backdrop. (The Bush Presidential campaign was very good at this—as in Bush's boating foray into Boston Harbor.) His recent clean air proposal was made before a group of congressional leaders, governors, executives of private industry, and representatives of conservation groups, and was immediately followed by a Presidential trip to the Tetons, which is about as picturesque a place as there is in this country. (The environment is a big issue with the public now, both here and in Europe, which helps explain why the Bush Administration also wanted to stress the environment at the recent economic summit meeting.) If, as in the case of clean air, the President later weakens his proposal, not much of the public will notice. The proposal for campaign finance reform was made before a group of congressional summer internes, Marine band and all. A Presidential adviser says that the White House staff has got much better at coördinating with its own political people, as well as with members of Congress, before making a proposal, and at figuring out the best timing for making it. The President's trip to Poland and Hungary last week was billed in advance as much for the anticipated crowds as for its content, which led much of the media covering the trip to focus on the crowds, and left the President's advisers some explaining to do when the predicted turnout didn't always materialize. None of these things, of course, have anything to do with substance. The Presidency, like the campaign that precedes it, has become increasingly a matter of tactics and polls and staging.

NOWHERE was this more apparent than in Bush's performance following the Supreme Court decision, on June 21st, that burning the American flag is a form of political protest protected by the First Amendment. The last thing he was apparently prepared to do was defend the decision, even celebrate it as an embodiment of our liberties and our strength as a nation. The first thing he did was disappointing but wasn't, given the political realities, too awful: the day after the decision, he said, "I understand the legal basis for that decision, and I respect the Supreme Court. And as President of the United States I will see that the law of the land is fully supported. But I have to give you my personal, emotional response. Flag-burning is wrong, dead wrong." Then, as the uproar over the decision grew, five days later, on a Tuesday, he called an early-morning press conference for the purpose of announcing that he supported a constitutional amendment to make burning the flag a crime. By way of explanation of this Presidential backing of what would be the first constitutional amendment whittling away the Bill of Rights, Bush's aides said that he felt "viscerally" about it. Perhaps so, but by now Bush was rushing to catch up with a wave of popular emotion—exactly the kind of emotion the Bill of Rights is there to protect the rights of others against—and "viscerally" is not supposed to be the way Presidents govern, especially when it comes to questions of war or liberty. By contrast, when the Supreme Court's decision cutting back on the right to an abortion came down, Bush was on the golf course at Kennebunkport, and sent Sununu before the press to say that Bush still favored a constitutional amendment banning abortion (except in certain circumstances) and was "pleased" with the Court's decision because it "moves in the right direction." The President's reticence in this instance may be accounted for by the fact that a majority of the people support the right to have an abortion; now those who favor freedom of choice were likely to become more politically active and present more of a political challenge to the right-to-lifers, who, though a minority, had through their intensity dominated the Republican Party's policy. After the Supreme Court had rendered four decisions cutting back on affirmative action, Bush, when asked about this at a press conference, said he was unfamiliar with the decisions. (He later told reporters that

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Attorney General Richard Thornburgh had reported to him that the Court decisions didn't jeopardize affirmative action.) These decisions, especially the abortion decision, which in effect reopened the question in all of the states, are already causing problems for Republicans who want to stay toward the center. (Bush, who in his long quest for the Presidency went from being pro-choice to espousing a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion, will most likely, if he has the chance, appoint Justices in the same mold as those chosen by Reagan, who through his appointments refashioned the Court.)

The White House had a little trouble drafting a flag amendment that would cover exactly what the President and others had in mind (burning the flag is, after all, the legally prescribed way of disposing of one), and eventually signed on to a constitutional amendment drafted by House Minority Leader Robert Michel, of Illinois, and G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery, Democrat of Mississippi. It says, "The Congress and the states shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States"; this had its own ambiguity, leaving some question as to what behavior might be encompassed by "desecration." On Friday morning, three days after Bush's press conference, the White House arranged for the President to unfurl his amendment in front of the Iwo Jima Memorial.

ANY thought that campaigning is separable from governing should have been dispelled by the flag episode. There wasn't a politician in Washington who didn't have a sharp memory of last year's Presidential campaign, and of the hapless Michael Dukakis being assaulted for, among other things, having vetoed as unconstitutional a bill requiring that teachers lead their students in the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone remembered Bush's appropriation of the flag and his visit to the flag factory. (What was forgotten was that even Bush's advisers had concluded that the flag-factory visit was excessive.) The obvious decline in political courage in recent years has been in direct proportion to the increasing role played in campaigns by consultants, tacticians, pollsters. Increasingly, our politics is defined by pseudo-scientific amorality. The increasingly sophisticated use of political ads, the demonstrated effectiveness of negative campaigning, make it decreasingly likely that politicians will do anything that might be unpopular. The budget deficit is only one of several results. As the important issues become more complex, politicians resort to simplification, falling back on issues—which may or may not be relevant to anything that matters—that they think the public can understand. The essentially content-free campaigns we have seen lately are the product of the campaign consultants, whose preoccupation is with tactics. (Of course, the candidate must be obliging.) This genre of campaigns, together with the need for the money to run them, militates against the exercise of political leadership. The early political education of many of us contained debates on the role of the political representative: to what extent it is to lead or to follow the opinions of those who elected him. But now, in this country, the idea of leading the people is almost completely passé. If a politician wanted to stick his neck out, the political strategist would tell him that if he persisted in such nonsense he couldn't get elected. The consultant might not even accept him as a client.

The flag episode was a vivid example of the strong, often predominant, role played in our contemporary politics by cowardice and fear. When the Supreme Court flag opinion came down, any politician could envision an ad asking where he had been when it came to standing up for the flag—the Bill of Rights notwithstanding—and few were willing to offer themselves as a target for such an ad. And George Bush, who has every reason to know better, couldn't resist exploiting the issue, even engaging in demagoguery. An amendment limiting the Bill of Rights was an excessive and unnecessary response to a not very large problem: the republic didn't fall when the young man burned the flag in Dallas, during the 1984 Republican Convention there. Bush's choosing to once again exploit the flag for political purposes came at a time when he had had some success in disconnecting himself from last year's campaign, in convincing people that that was then and now is now, that he really wasn't the shrill, demagogic, anything-goes politician we had seen a fair amount of last year. His behavior on the Supreme Court's

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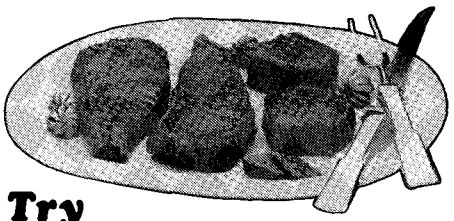

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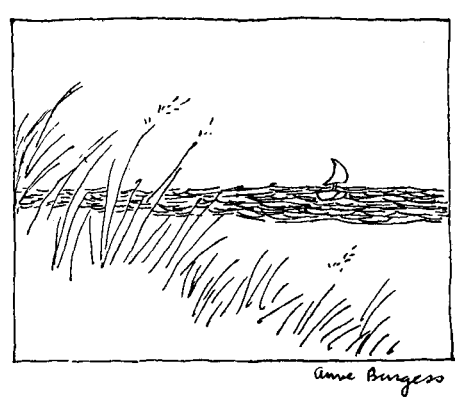
flag decision reminded people that the Presidential candidate and the President were the same guy.

Given the realities of contemporary politics, there should have been no surprise when, on the day after the decision, the Senate, supposedly "the world's greatest deliberative body," voted ninety-seven to three for a resolution expressing its "profound disappointment" with the Court's decision. A number of senators know better, and are in fact angry with the Court for presenting them with this issue; they say that the Court simply shouldn't have taken the case. Two of the nay votes were by Democratic liberals—Edward Kennedy, of Massachusetts, and Howard Metzenbaum, of Ohio—and the third was cast by an extreme conservative, Gordon Humphrey, Republican of New Hampshire, who is not running for reëlection next year. In the brief debate on the proposal, Humphrey said, "This just seems to me an exercise in silliness and even a little bit of hypocrisy." On the following day, the Senate, by voice vote, adopted an amendment to the pending child-care bill, making it, by statute, a crime to burn the flag. There is a school of thought that the Court would find acceptable a law that made burning the flag a crime as long as it did not ascribe any political content to the act, as the Texas statute the Court struck down did. (The Texas statute made it a crime to "deface, damage, or otherwise physically mistreat [the flag] in a way that the actor knows will seriously offend one or more persons likely to observe or discover his action.") But not all legal experts agree, and no one can know for sure what the Court would do.

In the House, the new Speaker, Thomas Foley, a few days after the Court decision, said publicly that he opposed a constitutional amendment—even before the President said he would support such an amendment. As the public frenzy built—and was encouraged by Bush—House leaders arranged for the members to vote on a carefully worded resolution expressing "profound concern" about the decision and denouncing flag-burning; the resolution passed by a vote of four hundred and eleven to five. But that wasn't enough for many House members, who the next day forced an all-night session so that they could make speeches in favor of the flag and against the Court decision. Foley and a few allies then moved to slow down the freight train, calling for hearings, to begin after the July Fourth recess, on whether there should be statutory language making it possible to outlaw flag-burning or whether a constitutional amendment was needed. They knew that House members would insist on doing something, but hoped that the passage of time and testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights—headed by Don Edwards, of California, a former F.B.I. agent, who is a fierce protector of individual rights—would make it possible to head off a constitutional amendment. (A secondary problem with one's being adopted is that it would set a precedent that might lower the threshold for adoption of other constitutional amendments.) Yesterday, Charles Fried, who was Solicitor General under Reagan, said that the Court decision was correct, and that he had kept the government from intervening in the case. Fried urged the subcommittee to reject both a constitutional amendment and legislation, saying there are times when the legislators have to do "the right thing." Edwards replied, resignedly, "Your point of view is the right point of view, but it's such a loser." In any case, Republicans will probably try to force a House floor vote on a constitutional amendment, and, whether or not one is adopted (it requires a two-thirds vote of both houses, followed by ratification by three-fourths of the states), will undoubtedly run an ad campaign against anyone who didn't support a constitutional amendment. In the Senate, Majority Leader George Mitchell last week scheduled for this fall votes on a constitutional amendment or a statute; this compromise, reached with Minority Leader Robert Dole, puts more pressure on Foley to arrange for a floor vote on an amendment as well as on a statutory change. Mitchell, a former federal judge, has avoided speaking out against a constitutional amendment, saying simply that he is against flag-burning and favors "constitutional legislation" to prevent it.



FOR a number of reasons, including the flag issue, many Democrats are now afraid of Bush, as well as the political machinery that sustains him. At first, this development seemed unlikely: Bush was not particularly combative, even forgave Democratic senators who voted against John Tower's nomination as Defense Secretary, and he certainly didn't seem to be a formidable political force. But the demonstrated willingness of the President and the people around him to play hardball, their ability to glom on to (or create) issues that put opponents on the defensive and to slam those opponents with all the modern technology that exists, has struck fear among Democrats who never expected to fear George Bush. They are keenly aware that two of the roughest hardball players, Lee Atwater and Ed Rollins, head the Republican National Committee and the National Republican Congressional Committee, which works on House campaigns. Democrats have to constantly consider any action that could produce merciless press releases, mailings, or ads. (Some proposals are offered for a vote in order to get members on record on a "hot button" issue.) This week Rollins went after, through press releases, House members who had voted against an amendment to cut funds for the National Endowment for the Arts because it had supported two highly controversial art projects, and also members who had voted against random drug testing in the State Department and the Agency for International Development. The releases said that the members had supported "federally subsidized obscenity" and gone "AWOL" in the war on drugs. Around the Fourth of July, a House liberal who should have little to worry about said to me, "Democrats are afraid of Bush. They're as afraid of him as they were of Ronald Reagan in 1981. They're afraid of the combination of Bush, Atwater, and Rollins. This makes them want to work out compromises with Bush." Not long before that, one of the younger Democratic senators said, "This isn't a time people want to confront George Bush—ain't

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very good politics right now. I don't think anybody feels now that the country wants to have a confrontation."

There is always the danger, of course, that political toughs will overreach. The famous Republican National Committee memorandum that attempted to smear Foley, who had just ascended to the Speakership, as a closet homosexual set the Republican cause in the House back substantially. The memo, which was circulated in early June, had as its purpose getting the smear into print and on the air—and in that it succeeded, since most news outlets couldn't resist explaining what the innuendo of the memo was about. Mark Goodin, the R.N.C.'s communications director, was forced to resign amid the uproar over the memo, which was denounced by House and Senate Republican leaders. Some Republicans were angered by the memo's sliminess, others by its political stupidity. At the time, many House Republicans were elated by the downfall of both former Speaker Jim Wright and former Majority Whip Tony Coelho (who quit rather than go through an inquiry on certain financial dealings); these Republicans were delighted with the double embarrassment to the Democrats, and some hoped to use the corruption issue against them. So, whatever else was wrong with it, the memo about the popular Foley was ill-timed, since it made the R.N.C.—and, in particular, Atwater—the issue. In the ensuing clamor, Wright and Coelho were all but forgotten. Atwater's denial that he had seen the memo before it went out didn't hold water with a lot of people. It was, after all, in the tradition of Atwater's tactics, and he had, at first, when the reaction against the memo began to build, brushed it off to the press as "no big deal." (Goodin was not forced to resign until two days later.) We had heard a lot of Atwater denials before; last year he said with a perfectly straight face that he wished Willie Horton was white. The night after the story of the memo broke, Atwater, following a phone call to him from Sununu, called Foley to apologize. Meanwhile, the President was said by his spokesman to have said the memo was "disgusting" and to have "rebuked" Atwater, but also to have accepted Atwater's word that he had not known about the memo before it went out. Foley, wishing to put an end to the matter, said publicly that "the issue is closed."

Whether or not Atwater actually knew about the memo beforehand is at best a metaphysical question; it was the sort of thing that keeps happening around him. Of course, what Atwater did in the Presidential campaign last year had to have the approval of the campaign chairman, James Baker, and the candidate, George Bush. Some Democrats charge that Bush and Atwater are continuing the good-cop, bad-cop routine of last year. Sununu said on NBC that Atwater had dealt with Goodin "as soon as he recognized what was in that memo"—which was patently untrue. Lying has almost become the norm for cornered political figures, and there appears to be no penalty for it. (Reagan was a prolific liar throughout the Iran-Contra affair.) But Atwater paid a price for the Foley episode, and is in fact still paying one: he has to be more careful now, since a great many people are prepared to pounce the next time he is caught at his old tricks. Many people, including some political allies, think he will be.

BUSH has taken various steps to make sure that the right wing of his party remains content enough. Leading conservatives are called in for meetings with the White House staff and with the President as well. The right wing of the Republican Party is never satisfied with a Republican President (it was even critical of Reagan), but this is in part a matter of tactics: it's a way of keeping the President and his advisers on guard. (The left wing of the Democratic Party behaves the same way in the case of a Democratic President, which of course there hasn't been for a long time.) It's the right wing that can cause trouble at a Republican National Convention, even challenge a President's renomination, as Ronald Reagan did to Gerald Ford. The dwindling number of Republican moderates, who used to count Bush as one of them, have precious little power in the Party. Because Bush used to be one of them, and is as near to their views as a Republican President is likely to be for some time, they give him more support in Congress than they used to give Reagan; this makes it harder than it was under Reagan for the Democrats to win over Republican votes on some key issues.

At a meeting with leaders on the right, including some evangelicals, in late June, White House aides listened to their complaints and demands for about forty-five minutes, and then brought in the President to hear them out. Among the matters the group wanted the White House to be responsive on were monitoring the election scheduled to be held in Nicaragua next February, and standing firm on the minimum wage as well as on the President's proposal to give tax credits for child care, including credits to families in which the mother stayed home. (This was a highly contentious point in the Senate debate, in mid-June, and the Bush proposal essentially lost.) The right, says a White House aide, was pleased by the President's veto of the minimum wage bill passed by Congress, because, as a symbolic matter, it wanted him to say no on something, not compromise on everything. Then, says the White House aide, "they might be able to persuade him to say no on something they really care about." The conservatives also cautioned Bush to be careful about the Soviet Union. Sununu, a conservative himself, helps see that the President doesn't drift too far from the right wing, or do many things that upset it. Sununu says that there are "a variety of issues the President feels strongly about and happen to correspond with issues important to conservatives." Among these, he says, are abortion and the Strategic Defense Initiative (Bush has not broken with Reagan's insistence that the United States, in its negotiations with the Soviet Union, demand the right to develop and deploy an S.D.I. system). Sununu also says that conservatives "applauded" the President's position on child care. The conservatives have succeeded in blocking the naming of at least four prospective appointees, including a prospective Deputy Attorney General, the prospective overseer of the welfare program, the person to manage Medicare, and a prospective member of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (the last because she had belonged to the American Civil Liberties Union).

THE President's recent trip to Eastern Europe was both a public-relations exercise (Bush didn't in-

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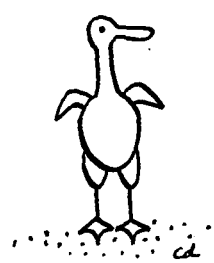
vent this use of Presidential foreign travel) and an effort to encourage the move toward independence in the region, and also to offset Mikhail Gorbachev's international popularity. (This was a major reason the White House put such emphasis on the size of the expected crowds.) Though Bush and his people say that Gorbachev's popularity in Western Europe doesn't bother them, they definitely act as if it does. Because of the state of our economy (the deficit), and because Bush has tied economic help to Eastern European countries to their undertaking more economic reforms, Bush didn't have much of a concrete nature to offer Poland and Hungary. He did encourage the Western allies, at the economic summit, to join in aiding those countries (which some of them were already doing), and the summit group decided to hold a follow-up meeting organized by the European Community to work on "concerted" support to Poland and Hungary. Bush's experience in foreign policy, his long training in nuances, did show in his visits to Poland and Hungary. The whole idea was to encourage more economic independence (which would have as a concomitant political independence) without undermining Gorbachev. The Administration's policy, after all, is to hope that Gorbachev succeeds in his efforts to open up the Soviet Union and reform its economy, because this could bring about the kinds of structural changes that would be welcome in the West. (A number of U.S. officials think that Gorbachev's position is very shaky, since his reforms aren't going well—and in opening up the political system a bit he has made himself more vulnerable to attacks, which he is getting, from both his left and his right.) So Bush's visit to Eastern Europe was significant for what he did not do while there: he didn't call for the elimination of Communist regimes, didn't incite the Eastern European nations to declare their independence from the Soviet Union, didn't call for these nations to leave the Warsaw Pact, and avoided blatant anti-Sovietism. (Before he left on the trip, however, he did call on Gorbachev to remove Soviet troops from Poland, which he must know the Soviets can't yet do, since they need a dependable pipeline to East Germany. Soviet troops are being removed from Hungary.) A more neophyte President might not have handled the situation as delicately. (Sununu, though, managed to insult most of Poland by saying, on NBC, during the President's trip there, "You can't create the problem of a young person in the candy store, where there is so much there that they don't know which direction to take and don't have the self-discipline to take the right steps.") The President and his foreign-policy advisers remembered enough history to avoid creating unrealistic expectations in Eastern Europe, and they didn't want to put at risk the processes of economic and political reform that are already going on there.



Bush's much discussed "caution" in foreign policy at least has the virtue of —usually—avoiding headlong actions that should have received more thought. (The sending of troops to Panama remains puzzling, and in any case neither this nor other actions by the United States seem to have nudged General Manuel Noriega from power.) Bush is still criticized for not showing much passion on the subject of the crackdown in China: maybe people should start to realize that Bush's upbringing prevents him from speaking with much passion. But the Chinese episode has excited both the old "China firsters" on the right and also liberals who are incensed by the crackdown, as well as those in between, and both houses of Congress recently passed resolutions calling for more retaliatory action than Bush has taken. Congressional leaders were in close touch with the Administration, and the legislation was kept to something the Administration could accept. In the case of the Middle East, the Administration, mainly in the person of Secretary of State James Baker, has recently made some missteps—the kind of missteps that can come from a combination of excessive self-confidence and lack of experience. There was the odd spectacle of, over several days, Baker and other State Department officials letting it be known that the Administration would send a special envoy to Israel to deal with the Likud Party's new demands in connection with the proposed elections in the West Bank and Gaza, and White House officials saying, No we won't. National Security Council officials raised questions about the agenda of such an emissary—couldn't he get sucked into the vortex of Israeli politics, and what if the mission ended in failure? Such was the confusion that late last week, while travelling from East to West Europe, the President of the United States had to tell the press that no decision about an envoy had been made, and say, "I'm the President of the United States. . . . I have to say what our policy is." The next day, Sununu announced that there would be no envoy.

IT appears that the leaders of the seven major industrial nations who gathered for the economic summit meeting in Paris at the end of last week did everything except discuss economics. These annual meetings used to be low-key, and provided a forum for discussing the coördination of currencies, interest rates, economic growth, and the like. Had this one followed tradition, however, it would have got into such unpleasant (for the United States) subjects as our budget deficit, or such touchy questions as how seriously to take recent signs of renewed inflation, how to keep the currency rates stabilized, and how to resolve conflicts over trade policy. (The existing mechanism for dealing with exchange rates, worked out two and a half years ago by the Group of Seven's finance ministers, has become a bit frayed.) Economic summit communiqués are largely written in advance, and before Bush left on his trip White House officials here were making it clear that they had little interest in having the economic summit focus on economic issues. They said that it would be mainly about the environment. The environmental movement is especially strong in Germany, and even Britain's Margaret Thatcher has become something of an environmentalist. (In the recent elections to the European Parliament, Greens did very well; the Conservative Party in Britain was trounced by a combination of Labour and Greens.) The summit communiqué spoke of "the urgent need to safeguard the environment for future generations" but made little in the way of specific proposals. But coming into the summit, the Bush Administration was more eager for a discussion on increased aid to Poland and Hungary. The Administration had also hoped to have worked out by the end of the summit the first embodiment of the so-

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called Brady plan (named after Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady), to deal with Third World debt by getting banks to write off some of it, with additional contributions by international lending institutions—an agreement on Mexico's staggering debt—but that didn't happen. Negotiations between Mexico and the lending banks, with United States officials coaching, are still under way. However, even if an agreement is reached on Mexico some Administration officials say that the same approach will not necessarily apply to other Third World debtor nations, many of which haven't taken the steps Mexico has to reform their economies. "You just can't generalize about these countries' economies," an official says. And he added, "Nobody has proposed that we have a way of dealing with these nations that will cause a major change in their economies." The Administration contented itself with a summit endorsement of the concept of the Brady plan. François Mitterrand, as President of France the summit's host, has long pushed for a North-South conference on Third World debt, and had discomfited some of the Group of Seven's leaders by inviting a large number of Third World leaders to be in Paris for the concurrent celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the storming of the Bastille. But the big seven kept the poorer nations sufficiently at bay, and the Administration was pleased to escape Paris with no stronger summit commitment on aiding them. (Before the meeting, White House aides also said that the meeting wouldn't be very important in terms of displaying Bush, since it would take place over a weekend, when there is less attention to the news, and it would be a group event. Far more important to the White House were Bush's travels in Eastern Europe and his stop in Holland on the way home, to commemorate the place from which the Pilgrims had set out for America and to celebrate the moves toward freedom in Eastern Europe, calling this "a time of new hope.") So the Group of Seven observed France's fantastic celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of its revolution, dined magnificently, and concentrated on the less troublesome subjects. Perhaps because they wanted to continue to avoid other ones, and perhaps because, as Bush said, the group was indeed "kind of running out of gas," the summit's concluding banquet was cancelled (in Paris, of all places). Gorbachev managed to horn in on the meeting by sending a letter to Mitterrand indicating a desire that the Soviet Union be more involved in international economic affairs.

On Sunday afternoon at the end of the meeting, Bush held an outdoor press conference at the grand residence of the American Ambassador to France. He may have been tired, but he sprang down the steps toward his waiting audience (he has learned from Reagan the importance of the good entrance), and conducted the press conference with assurance. But he gave an occasional hint of what is much on the mind of Administration officials—the economic slowdown that has been taking place here. The question is whether the long-running recovery can be brought to what is termed a soft landing. As is often the case with administrations, the Federal Reserve Board has been more concerned about inflation than has the Bush Administration, which has been more concerned about a sharp slowdown in economic growth. Alan Greenspan, the Fed chairman, took steps earlier this summer to loosen credit, but not all Administration officials feel he has gone far enough. (Yesterday, however, the government reported that in June the rise in inflation had halted, but today Greenspan, in testimony before a congressional committee, said inflation is still too high and suggested that the Fed would do no further loosening now; he said it was seeking to avoid "an unnecessary and destructive recession.") Nor has the Administration been completely successful at holding the dollar to a low enough level to keep exports increasing (and thus our growth continuing); some, including members of the Federal Reserve System, and other nations, worry that a too low dollar will increase inflation.

So, as Bush returned home on Tuesday, at the same time that Congress was buckling down to legislative business, and on the same day that the government announced a sharp rise in the trade deficit and predicted a slower rate of growth for the remainder of the year (a prediction many economists felt was still optimistic), he faced his biggest domestic challenges yet.

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BOOKS

Great Expectations

"THE LAST TIFFANY: A BIOGRAPHY OF DOROTHY TIFFANY BURLINGHAM," by Michael John Burlingham (Atheneum; $22.50), is a life of Louis Comfort Tiffany's youngest child, who became Anna Freud's closest friend and her professional collaborator. Suffering impelled Dorothy's transit from Age of Innocence New York to Age of Anxiety Vienna; her journey ended in professional achievement and personal failure. This book, though, is a success. The author, who is Dorothy's grandson, imparts suspense along with information, illuminates history, and involves us in questions about human relations which Dorothy, like all of us, could not answer.

He opens with Dorothy's birth, in 1891 (she died in 1979), in her father's mansion at Madison Avenue and Seventy-second Street. The only rival to this nonesuch palace of the Gilded Age was the other nonesuch palace he built, at Oyster Bay, Long Island. (The town house was razed in 1936; the country house burned down in 1957.) Depending on the reader's taste, Burlingham's descriptions of Tiffany interiors will evoke a "Wow!" or an "Ugh!," but the author knows that styles express visions. Later in his narrative, when Dorothy and Anna adopt peasant simplicity, he helps us recognize that their choice of style, too, was an effort to vanquish reality.

Once the author gets his subject born and explains why she felt there was no place for her in her famous tribe, he goes back to the Tiffanys' beginnings and recounts the family's rise. This is no exercise in genealogical glorification. Until he wrote this book, the author knew little about his paternal ancestors because his father, Dorothy's oldest son, and mother were divorced. Unlike Dorothy, Michael Burlingham can view Burlinghams and Tiffanys with detachment. He sums up the gift of her grandfather and her father—Charles Lewis Tiffany (1812-1902), who founded the store, and his son Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933), a painter, decorator, designer, and manufacturer, who is best known today for his work in glass—as "an uncanny knack for divining the mood, taste, and fashion of the times." The Tiffanys belong with Hearst and Pulitzer, Sarnoff and Paley, and the nineteen-twenties movie moguls as Americans who used new techniques to mirror, divert, and educate new publics. Like millions of other families, including the Freuds, the Tiffany family lived in provincial obscurity until the opportunities offered by the nineteenth century drew them to the metropolis. Charles came down from Connecticut and opened his store in New York City in 1837, a depression year. Calculating that only the rich could keep shopping through busts as well as booms, he decided to deal in luxury goods. He was frugal, prudent, opportunistic, hardworking, and shrewd, and he became a multimillionaire. The author also shows us the idealism in his passion for quality. Louis Comfort, though as energetic as his father, was incorrigibly extravagant and willful. After military school failed to impart the discipline necessary for business, Charles capitulated and allowed Louis to study painting. Yet the dream of dynasty persisted, and the author emphasizes that when Dorothy arrived

"I sensed a fine balance between the misery on the stage and the misery in the audience."

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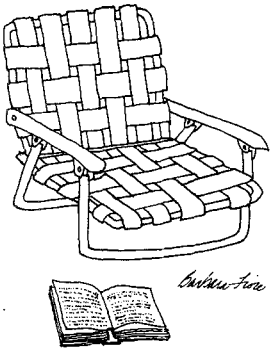
the Tiffanys were hoping for a son.

Dorothy's mother died of cancer in 1904, when Dorothy was twelve. Her father consoled himself with the bottle, and his alcoholic violence terrified the girl. In 1914, she married Robert Burlingham, a physician. He became manic-depressive, and Dorothy left him in 1921, when she was pregnant with their fourth child. The author's father, Bob, was high-strung and sensitive, and in 1925, after learning that Anna Freud was psychoanalyzing children, Dorothy travelled to Vienna with all four children. The women liked each other immediately. Engrossed by Anna and welcomed by Sigmund, Dorothy entered a warm circle where, for the first time in her life, she was considered capable. With Anna's encouragement, and with Sigmund as her personal and training analyst, she began to qualify as a child analyst.



Her husband and his parents struggled with her for the control—or, sometimes, only for the company—of the children. In this tug-of-war, no one seems to have remarked that Dorothy was doing too much for her children's good, yet even before we learn how the story comes out, her overmothering makes us uneasy. To spare her children the rigidity of a Viennese public education, she founded a tiny private school. (She later thought that that had been a mistake.) She kept all four in analysis, and the author thinks that by retaining Anna as their analyst Dorothy made it impossible for all of them, but particularly for the older two, to attain emotional independence. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, in her biography of Anna Freud, concurs.

The Nazi invasion sent Dorothy and all her children back to the United States. The children stayed. However, in 1940, Dorothy joined Anna in London. She never returned to this country to live, and her ashes remain in the Freud crypt in Golders Green. Dorothy's intimacy with Anna elicited gossip, but this author, like Young-Bruehl, rejects the possibility that they were lovers.

Because Dorothy was a girl, her family never thought of providing her with a goal; her father refused to let his daughters attend college. The Freuds gave Dorothy training and purpose; despite a late start, periods of emotional turmoil, and two episodes of tuberculosis, she accomplished an enormous amount of work. In Vienna, she wrote and published papers, saw patients, and helped in a day nursery that cared for and studied the children of the very poor. In London, she served in Anna's famous wartime crèche and, after the war, in her Hampstead Child Therapy Course and Clinic. Dorothy also did research and writing of her own in London. She studied twins (her older sisters were twins), and she devised a method of coördinating the analyses of mothers and children. Before the Anschluss, she had taken an interest in the psychological development of blind children, and in postwar London she devoted two decades of research to blind children and ran a day school for them. Her work blended compassion and curiosity: she sought to help as she tried to understand.

One theme of this book is familiar in American life: the nightmare of succession in families that owe their position to achievement. The reader is struck by the contrast between the diligent, obedient, and loyal young men who clerked in Charles Lewis Tiffany's store and the merchant's unmanageable sons. (Louis Comfort had a younger brother, Burnett, the author describes as "addlepated." His earliest gesture of independence was marrying a prostitute; the family got him a divorce and tied up his inheritance.) Dorothy's father-in-law, Charles Culp Burlingham, who was a distinguished lawyer and a valued adviser to several generations of American political and legal reformers, had twice broken down trying to live up to his father's demanding standards, but he himself was a demanding father, and two of his three children broke down. About Dorothy the author observes, "Despite Dorothy's every effort to reverse the priorities of the Tiffany imperative, she had remained in its thrall; ultimately she was more successful at work than life."

The author began to know his grandmother only when she was very

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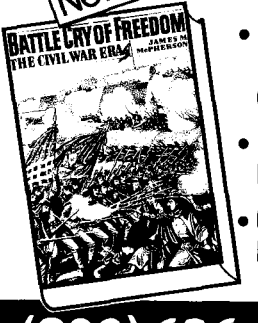

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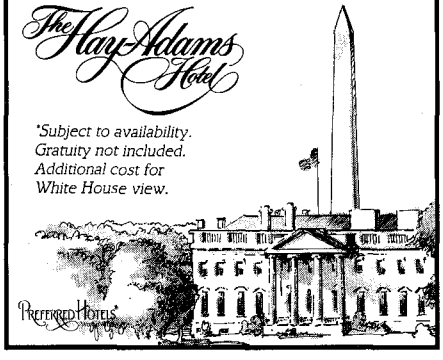

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old, but he has reconstructed her youth and her years in Vienna with wonderful persuasiveness. He gives us a sense of places and times—of the Hudson River Valley in the middle nineteenth century, when well-off city dwellers, like Charles Lewis Tiffany, were turning working farms into gentlemen's estates; and of Berchtesgaden before Hitler found it, when the Freuds and Dorothy summered there. Although the author is, in a sense, a victim in this tragedy of good intentions —his father broke down, as *his* father had, and died young, and Dorothy's daughter Mabbie, the author's aunt, committed suicide—and reports that "the deaths of Bob and Mabbie severely strained Dorothy's relationships with some of her grandchildren," he doesn't let that strain distort his account. He tells us that "Bob's and Mabbie's children particularly found it hard to see Dorothy and Anna Freud in a positive light," adding, "There remains the ironic conclusion that psychoanalysis had been foisted upon them unnecessarily, and . . . when they had really needed help, Freudian ideology had discouraged them from seeking it, for example, in the realm of pharmacology." (Young-Bruehl, however, says that Bob was given anti-depressant medication.) But Burlingham doesn't make the Freuds villains; we never doubt that they loved Dorothy.

Most of the people in this book are rich or famous, or both; even the bit players—Gustave Herter, George Inness, Erik Erikson—are somebodies. Yet Burlingham has not produced a spectacle at which plebs are invited to enjoy the tribulations of the great. He has realized his personages as individuals, and their human qualities transcend the Tiffanys' glitter, the Burlinghams' tireless noblesse oblige, and a certain staleness about the Freuds as they figure in book after book. The Burlinghams and Tiffanys offer an encyclopedia of the ways that patriarchal families fail their members, including their patriarchs, but Dorothy is no argument for matriarchy. Yet we all know—perhaps we all are —parents determined to spare their children their own remembered childhood miseries, and to make them happy adults by giving them perfect childhoods.

Dorothy is, I think, a kind of person with whom our society has not yet come to terms. We have understood that women may have religious vocations, and that even women we don't think of as poor may be forced to leave their homes and children to work; Clara Schumann, for instance, had to park her children where she could and resume her career as a touring virtuoso after her husband went mad. But I am not sure we know what to make of women like Dorothy, who are not driven by piety or financial necessity but find—often to their surprise—that their allegiance is to their work.

Was it worth it? Would we even ask if Dorothy had been a man? For the most part, Burlingham avoids the conclusive judgment. There are passages in which it seems to me he mistakenly votes against Dorothy, but I think he is right in insisting on her resemblance to her father: neither of them understood emotional compromise. When Dorothy's children outgrew her total mothering, she decided, "The children do not need me"; she couldn't imagine being needed less, or needed differently, but still needed. There are passages in which the author seems to call the Freudian enterprise into question, passages in which he recognizes its importance in Western culture, and passages in which he employs Freudian concepts to examine Dorothy's motives. But this is not surprising: science is constructed to be superseded, and its most brilliant insights become building blocks for structures which no one could have foreseen. As for Dorothy's work, the pages in which Burlingham describes how her empathy and empiricism remodelled our understanding of blind children redeem all his criticisms. I suspect that each reader, depending on his or her experience, will respond differently to Dorothy and her family, yet Burlingham's research, insight, and honesty guarantee that every reader will respond intensely: we can no more escape his family than we can our own. —NAOMI BLIVEN

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Eight bands will march, including a pipe-and-drum corps and a Dixieland group. On display will be horse-drawn wagons, a 1906 electric car, a 1970 Corvette, horses and riders, and a mule carrying old-time coal mining equipment.

The parade is expected to last three years, Parker said.—*Springfield (Ill.) State Journal-Register.*

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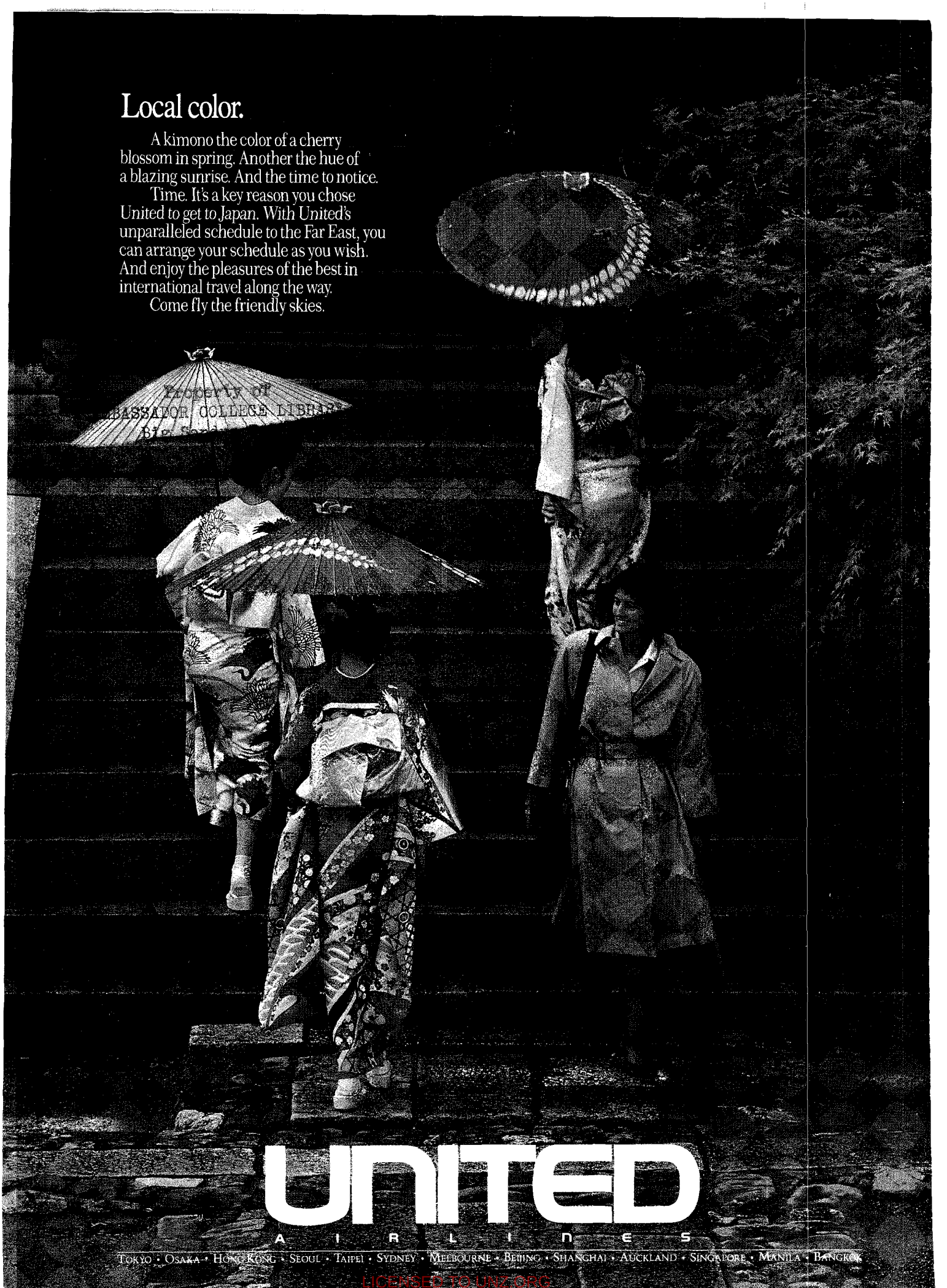
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